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ANTHONY'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

LONG ago, as time is counted in this progressive age, before the construction of those giant hotels and clubs wherein is congregated cosmopolitan wealth, before the lordly Thames Embankment sprang up over against them to be the nightly prowling-ground of pick-pockets and outcasts, there ran, somewhere between Battersea and London Bridge (the precise locality is immaterial), parallel to the river and upon its northern side, a ramshackle street which subsequent improvements have swept away so irrevocably that even its site is forgotten. It vanished unmourned by antiquarian or topographical student: historical or picturesque interest it had none, only a certain typical quality of sordidness of which there were sufficient examples remaining, and always will remain, to suffice the sociological enquirer; and thus it has been erased, literally and figuratively, for good.

Among the numerous wharves and slips debouching from it and obtruding upon the slimy river, was one rejoicing in the amazingly inappropriate name of Rosebank Wharf; and thither, on a stormy March night, or rather morning, for midnight had struck an hour past, the story proceeds and halts in front of a row of irregular, frowning buildings which, lolling and shouldering one another, overhung the street. Like the rest,

the centre erection comprised within its grimy walls a temporary warehouse and permanent offices, and gave access to the wharf by means of a tunnel with semicircular roof, well adapted for receiving, and multiplying a hundredfold, the echoes of the traffic which rumbled over the cobblestones from sunrise to sunset. Now, however, commerce was taking its nightly surcease, and, save for the rain swishing across the windows, all was silent.

Rosebank Wharf had suffered a chequered existence; and though neither time nor change could render its native ugliness less unattractive, it bore the impress of many uses with a dogged air of favouring none and glorying in its own inadaptability. Snags, still rearing their heads above the mud at low tide, showed where a daring spirit had projected a miniature pier before official supervision was exercised over such ventures. A rusty skeleton of a crane, with all the running gear removed, stood at the extreme verge of the yard, recalling an era when heavy articles of merchandise had been landed there. In unconsidered nooks, and at irregular seasons, green sprouts had a habit of thrusting themselves upwards till unaccustomed surroundings choked their efforts, manifesting that grain had been unladen here by some forgotten tenant. A whitish deposit, which was also evident between the stones, showed, by its dulness in the

rain no less than by cracking in the sun, that a trader in cement had once leased the place and bequeathed to his successors this solitary memorial of his enterprise. Last of all, barges laden with bricks lurched up on the flood to Rosebank Wharf, and showered the red dust of their cargoes over the many traces of previous traffic without eliminating them.

At some period subsequent to the erection of the warehouse there had been added to it a squat little edifice, of no apparent intention and very apparent ugliness. It obtruded upon the yard, being cut off entirely from the road by the overshadowing warehouse it leaned against, and commanding instead an uninterrupted view of the slimy river crawling past it and of all that daily came and went by barge or cart or barrow. In this brick hut, (for it was little more) the owner of Rosebank Wharf had installed a caretaker, or watchman, whose duty consisted of scaring away trespassers when the premises were unlet, and occasionally acting as tallyman during their intermittent occupancy. To be tallyman, or checker of unladen goods, meant increased work and increased wages; but, alas, the owner was supine and wealthy, the site falling behind the times, the mud silting up; and the watchman for months together sustained on reduced emoluments the empty glory of being monarch of all he surveyed. The importer of bricks had last month, like his predecessors, sought other and more busy quarters; and upon this March night, when Scripture Soffit opened the door of his abode and peered under his hand toward the tunnel leading into the street, the domain he supervised rested a prey to desolation with only the tokens of departed traffic to suggest that it had ever claimed kin with civilisation.

He stood framed in the doorway, with the light flooding round him from behind, the wind-driven rain flogging at him in front, with an ear cocked sideways in listening attitude, and eyes blinking below a horizontal palm. He was habited after an old fashion, in knee-breeches and swallow-tailed coat, but no more could have been discerned clearly while he remained at his threshold. After a long pause, and with a slight disappointed shake of the head, he went in. In the full glow of his lamp Scripture Soffit might be surveyed more fruitfully.

He was a little, lean old man, with that peculiar colour and texture of skin almost universally accompanying a physiognomy naturally innocent of hair, faintly flushed with a colour rather orange than ruddy, and with scarce a wrinkle on it. Yet that did not make him look robust or youthful, any more than the complete absence of lashes and but rudimentary eyebrows made his aspect unpleasant. On the contrary his face suggested kindness, and had the hint of benevolent absent-mindedness sometimes seen in the higher social grade of the scholar, which the rapid twitching of his bare eyelids failed to dispel. He shook his head again when he was inside more dolefully than before, and fell to stirring a pot poised insecurely upon the little fire.

"Poor things, poor things!" he murmured; "she dazed, and Anthony with such a charge upon such a night — 'the wrathful skies gallow the very wanderers of the dark.'" He rounded off his quotation by lifting the iron spoon to his lips and sipping thoughtfully. "Twill be burned beyond palatableness," he muttered, resuming his stirring; "'twas put on to hot up three hours and more ago, and I was beginning to sniff hungrily then. The desire of the eyes to the young, the

desire of the stummick to the old—
tut! man lives by bread even while
his heart is hardest wrung, but I will
wait for them, poor things!"

He left his charge to stand again
in the driving rain; but no footfall
upon the uneven flags of the wharf
rewarded him. There were noises
in the street, and, despite the rigorous
weather, indications of people
still out and about. These manifestations
did not deceive or surprise
him. The street was never without
its distinctive turmoil,—the predominant
features of quarrelling, drunken
choruses and yelling children being
less noticeable by day on account of
the jolting traffic, but audible during
the hours provided for rest in a
squalid rise and fall. A fight was
going on somewhere, as Scripture
Soffit knew by the infallible tokens
gleaned of experience,—tokens, that
is, of joy, demonstrable in an infinite
variety of expletives, with female
voices joining in rapturously from
the favourable coigns of vantage
provided by open bedroom windows.
What is called, in pantomime jargon,
a rally, followed, succeeded by a
shout, temporary silence, and the
echo of scurrying hobnails. Again
Scripture Soffit's experience apprised
him of what he could not see; the
approach of a belated policeman had
evidently been signalled. He sighed,
and went in.

He refilled the smoky little lamp
before sitting down at the deal table
covered with paper by way of napery.
It is weary work waiting when the
feast is ready and the guests come not.
A piece of damp, cold bacon, flanked
by a dish of some green vegetable to
which the same adjectives could be
applied, along with cheese and butter
undecided in colour but certain in
odour, adorned the board. They
were normal comestibles in Scripture
Soffit's domestic arrangements, and

were displayed to throw into greater
glory, by contrast as it were, the
stew whose luscious fumes filled the
little room, and a certain bottle of
stumpy and convivial aspect, from
whose short neck the cork had not
yet been drawn. The seat he de-
signed for himself (it was furthest
from the fire) had a book in front of
it, opened face downward to keep
the place. He turned it up and
began to read, instantly falling into
that absorption which was suggested
by his mien, the absorption of the
man who loves books. The Dutch
clock on the mantel-piece ticked off
the minutes gravely like the solemn
old Hollander it was, only pausing
with a slight wheeze at the hours
before making up its mind that
striking was a riotous manifestation
beneath its sobriety, and passing on;
the stew murmured gently, and the
coals dropped one by one upon the
hearth; the rain threshed round
the chimney, and Scripture Soffit's
eyes travelled from page to page
until the sleepless street succumbed
for its brief respite from restlessness
before dawn. His jaw dropped
slightly, his lids with it, and he fell
into a jerky doze.

CHAPTER II.

"MR. SOFFIT!"

Scripture Soffit sprang up and clapped
his hand over another which lay
upon his shoulder. He turned down
his book,—it was a mechanical move-
ment, and part of him.

"Anthony, dear boy, and Aggie!
Come, that's right; better late than
never, eh? But, my dears, how wet
you are, and such a night! Lord!
You are dripping!"

They were literally dripping, and
tiny rills trickled from the young man
addressed as Anthony as he pulled off

a long topcoat, too thin and shrunken for such weather, and spread it before the fire. The brim of his soft felt hat ran like a surcharged gutter as he removed it, displaying a well-shaped head covered with black hair in which there was a natural curl and more than one streak of grey. His companion remained by the door, her bonnet (large with a suspicion of extravagance in its shape) hiding her face. She did not speak or move, but stood with her hands clasped across her bosom.

Scripture Soffit went to her, and drew her, unresisting but unresponsive, toward the blaze, unbuttoned with nervous fingers her drenched and muddy cloak, and then paused. She made no movement to help him. He flung back the veil and disentangled the bonnet from masses of tumbled hair, when a pair of staring expressionless eyes met his.

"Never a kiss for your old father?" said the old man tremulously, without making to take what he claimed. "No word of welcome, Aggie my dear, and me a stranger so long?"

His daughter leaned a cold cheek toward him, accepting his embrace like a statue. She placed one foot upon the fender, and warmed her numb fingers. When the men drew in to the table she resisted all entreaties to join them, but pushed her chair close to the fire and cowered towards it, with her hair falling about her shoulders and her hands resting in her lap.

"Well, well," said Scripture Soffit, sadly, "I hoped you would, my dear; but you're over-tired maybe, poor child." He looked toward his son-in-law helplessly. Such a sorry homecoming it was, with the wind wailing overhead, and his only child steeped in a sinister contortion of his own kindly abstraction. His book fell unheeded to the floor. He wished he could have afforded a table-cloth, for

he remembered her childhood's contempt of their poverty, and the bacon looked apologetically flabby. Even the crowning luxury of the stew, upon whose concoction he had expended so many laborious unaccustomed thoughts and whose consumption had caused him such pleasing anticipations of reunion, seemed gross and profitless. He doled it out without interest. Anthony took a full share to please him; but he knew that behind him his daughter shivered, and that an impalpable mist wreathed round her wet skirts.

"Hulloa, where is the cordial?" he began in dismay. "Why—" Anthony stopped him with a rapid gesture. "There's no cordial like soup," he went on with lame precipitation; "you may take my word for it. Come, Aggie, the littlest drop."

"I tell you, no!" retorted his daughter. "Leave me to myself. Do you think I can be cheerful to order, just because I have returned to this hovel, when fools—" she relapsed into silence without finishing the sentence, and drew nearer the fire.

"She is fatigued, Mr. Soffit," said Anthony. "We shall both be better for rest; we have walked from Richmond."

Scripture Soffit ceased from mechanically dosing himself with stew, and stared over the spoon at his companion, his eyelids twitching from necessity aggravated by distress until to have watched them would have made one giddy.

"From Richmond!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, a matter of eleven miles; but it is all over now."

"How could you be so thoughtless, Anthony?"

"How could we be otherwise?" cried Agatha without turning round. "Does gold grow on hedges, and do banknotes spring from a ditch like most of the impostors who call them-

selves actresses and take the bread from the lips of genius? I suppose we should have hired a chariot with hammercloth and powdered flunkeys complete? Where's the money coming from, I should like to know? You wouldn't provide it."

"I would if I could, my dear, God knows," returned her father. "I would help you every way I could. No one can say I have thwarted a single wish you have put tongue to."

"No one does," interrupted Anthony, with the quick intent of changing the current of conversation. "We shall be quite well and hopeful in the morning."

Agatha gave a short scream of laughter which made Scripture Soffit start as if he had been struck. It was the first unmistakable symptom vouchsafed to him of what he had been told to expect, and what he had fought against with all the innate optimism of his nature, that negative optimism, as it were, peculiar to such as he. Sapped early by the distinctive disease embodied in a passion for notoriety, such as was best gratified by the career toward which she inevitably drifted, his daughter's reason trembled in its rickety balance. She half turned towards the table with a declamatory gesture and rage flashing in her previously dull eyes. Anthony rose, and took her gently by the arm.

"She must have your bedroom, Mr. Soffit," he said over his shoulder. "Please bring a basin of soup. Now, Aggie."

Agatha relapsed into her former quiescence, and permitted him to lead her into the adjoining room. It was the only bedchamber Scripture Soffit's mansion boasted, and he, who had bestowed such exemplary pains upon the supper-table, had entirely forgotten to arrange a temporary resting-place for Anthony and himself. It

was characteristic of the man, as was the deep remorse he felt and showed when his remissness was borne in upon him.

Anthony's quiet insistence possessed some influence over his wife. With little display of authority he prevailed upon her to drink the soup and consent to go to bed. They left her alone. Anthony brought the bottle from where he had secreted it beneath the table and mixed two stiff glasses. Both men needed some stimulant, the elder perhaps the most; his thin form seemed to have shrunk in the last half hour, his withered hands fluttered aimlessly.

"Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me," he said beneath his breath. "But it is bitter hard, Anthony, and it must be worse for you. I should never have given in to the poor child's fancies. How long has she been growing so?"

"For two years now, perhaps more. Disappointed ambition,—the want of those things she rates so highly,—jealousy,—forgive me, Mr. Soffit, if I think a head more practically constructed could have withstood these things better. There is another craving, and the mere sight of the means to gratify it must be kept rigorously from her." He touched the bottle.

"In the morning—" began the old man brokenly.

"No," replied Anthony gravely; "at any rate not yet. Do not build illusive hopes, for the sake of your peace of mind. I did so at first, and it is because their demolition was so terrible to me that I would save you from a similar ordeal. With absolute quietness and rest it may be; but you know better than I how little that life suited her in childhood, and can gauge thereby how little it may effect; how much, we must not count upon until we see."

"My dear, it is better, and more

Christian, to look upon the bright side," said old Soffit. "All the good books, from the tale of the Great Teacher downward, preach hope."

Anthony Smith said nothing, and refrained from meeting the questioning gaze with which his father-in-law accompanied his words. It seemed as though he could not acquiesce, but would not wound by dissipating an optimism in which he could not share. The old man went on rather more strenuously, and stirring his glass of liquor in time to the metre.

"'Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years, slide soft
away
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day.'

Pope was right, Anthony. Seclusion from the maze that has brought her to this will restore her,—Nature's great medicine, rest. This is not the country sure enough," said Scripture Soffit, waxing almost enthusiastic, with mental pictures agitating every feature in his smooth withered face, "but it's next door to it. The wharf's unlet, and likely to stay so for some time to come if my calculations ain't out. No one troubles me from week's end to week's end; I might be in a pastoral solitude, Anthony. Why, she'll have oceans of quietude, and be again the pretty creature you went mad over, in no time!"

A barely perceptible frown, which passed immediately, contracted Anthony's forehead. The wind came beating at the window like a wanderer importuning shelter after many buffetings. In the temporary lull that followed he drew his chair beside his father-in-law's, and laid his hand upon the old man's knee. It was a well-formed hand indicative of breeding, very different from that holding Scripture Soffit's glass, and the contrast between the two told the bare

outlines of a tale. The elder man's thick fingers were the heritage of toil lightened and cheered in his particular case by a cultivation of intellect far above his class, the fingers of a man who, apart from the generally accepted monetary sense of the phrase, had risen; Anthony's were long and slim, a heritage from leisured progenitors, and at the same time a protest, as it were, against his presence under the watchman's roof, the husband of the watchman's crazy daughter.

When the gale broke into a howl after its pause, sweeping across the river like some phantom thing possessed, and deadening all sounds within, Anthony spoke in a low voice.

"She sleeps little and lightly, and to think we were talking of her might precipitate a paroxysm. They are the worst symptoms, and it was their frequency of occurrence during the last few months that decided me to detach her from her associations. I could not do so without threatening force. You see, Mr. Soffit, we—you—must not expect too much at first. I want most earnestly to warn you against doing so, for the cumulative effects of years cannot be removed in the same number of days. I tried to prepare you for a possible disaster in my letters from the very first moment I detected its possibility; I think you under-estimated my anxiety, and it is true enough I myself was unprepared for what is now dreadfully apparent. You know of her limited success, and how she chafed because the fame she felt so confident of never came; but you do not know of the petty spite, the malignant jealousy, the immeasurable vanity which flourish in all their gross luxuriance in her profession alone. Constant bickerings and peevish backbitings I became accustomed to. I could not stay them, even while I knew that taunting words levelled at her left a rankling

sting, while her companions enjoyed the opportunity for retort they supplied, or passed them by as part of the daily amenities. But when she took to brooding alone, to sullen fits of despondency alternated by outbursts of fury culminating more than once in personal violence, to eating less and less, to drinking secretly more and—

"Stop, stop, Anthony, for pity's sake!" cried the old man, burying his quivering face in his hands. "Heaven mend all, but I have hoped sorely for the best."

"Self-deception!" replied Anthony bitterly. "Self-deception, it has been my curse—"

"How? Yours?" asked Scripture Soffit, looking up at him in a dazed way.

"Never mind me. It is because I would not have you fall into the like error that I speak plainly. She may become more tractable, but it will be a long cure. We have none of the remedies—"

"Quiet is the surest thing, Anthony," interrupted Scripture Soffit eagerly. "I'm an older man than you, and take my word for it, there's no physick like quiet. Lord! In similar cases I've seen it do wonders—miracles-like, and with reverence I say it. What more can she want than she'll get here? Tender care, wholesome food, if poor, the river panorama to watch when it's fine, and her old father willing enough, God knows, to spend the whole day keeping of her bright indoors when it rains. All the doctors in Europe couldn't do more than that."

Anthony sighed and tried to look as if convinced. He was deadly tired, and the old man, who in some things was as unpractical as a baby, worried him by the very fact of his unreasoning hopefulness. A mechanical movement of Scripture

Soffit's winking eyes turned his thoughts in another direction. His gaze rested upon the clock and thence travelled to Anthony's much-worn boots.

"Lord!" he exclaimed. "Look at the time! You ought to be abed too, Anthony. Off you go, my boy, to the sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care." He patted Anthony's arm with a fatherly, protective air which was something pitiful and all pleasant.

"Aye, but where I am to go to?" enquired Anthony smiling. "I cannot disturb her. And what is to become of you?"

Scripture Soffit paused in consternation. "Well now," he said dismally, "to think I never thought of that! Stop a moment,—there's the book-closet; the vestry, you know, as the workmen here call it."

Beside the combined kitchen and living-room, and the bedroom where Agatha lay, the only other accommodation which the building afforded was a little hutch of a place, originally designed as a coal-shed or pantry. As the old man was in the habit of buying his fuel by the sixpenny-worth, or even, in hard times, of contenting himself with collecting fragments of wood left on the wharf at the time when, in one of its varying changes, it had been used to store timber, he had cleaned out the hutch soon after his instalment and devoted it to the storage of his books. These were very many, for in his long life, during portions of which daily meat had not always supplemented daily bread, he had never been too destitute or too hardly worked to find his chiefest solace among the second-hand dealers and peripatetic barrow-men,—to dig among their battered treasures, and rattle the coppers in his pocket wistfully because what he had saved from

two dinners would purchase but one volume. The result might not have pleased an æsthetic eye, but the scholar would have found among the dingy classics a source of unending cheer. They were nearly all English books, but some Latin authors, accorded a rude home-built shelf to themselves, also held a place. The limits of Scripture Soffit's self-instruction lay there. True, in a dusty corner reposed a Greek primer and a paper-covered edition of Homer; but they represented a field too long untilled for fruitful vintage, and, after much blind ploughing with none to help, abandoned regretfully at last.

"You must make shift here, Anthony," said the old man. "There's a rug to keep you warm, and to-morrow we must think of something else. The place is watertight, or I'd never have put the books in it."

"And what are you to do?" enquired Anthony.

"Oh, me?" said the old man, nonplussed again for a moment; but a brilliant inspiration struck him. "Why, before the fire, to be sure. What more can the most important want?"

"On a brick floor, or in a chair that will make you round-shouldered for the rest of your life," exclaimed Anthony, apostrophising him cheerily. "The same old Scripture Soffit!" He held up the smoky lamp he carried, so that the light shone on the old man's gentle face and blinking eyes.

"Aye, aye, the same old blind-worm, but not so sightless as to know who needs a rest most, the traveller or the stay-at-home. Bide here, Anthony; I shall be well enough. Wait a minute though; Lord! that's the thing; I'll trot round to John Snidgery's."

"Still alive, is he?" asked Anthony.

"Ah," replied Scripture Soffit, shaking his head sagely, "and thriving too.

His kind don't go under easy, like you and me, Anthony."

"That will do," said the young man, clearing a space among the books upon the table and placing the lamp down. "I will go there. Nonsense! I shall be the gainer, not you. Just a glance at Agatha and I will be off at once; we have already run two days further into one than is wise."

She lay on the bed, asleep unquietly, with a little light her father had placed behind her throwing shadows across her face. Yet, mingled with the swirling of the wind, her dream-ejaculations could still be heard, and in the dimness her face could be seen. A trifle bloated it was, or perhaps swollen were a better word; a trifle characterless, except when a passing passion flitted across it; but with the remains of youthful mobile beauty and of acute receptiveness in the pouting, full lip and arched nostril. The cheeks showed uneven patches of faint red, but it would not have been hard to figure her, younger, sweet-minded, and sanguine, with the down unbrushed away, and the clear colour ebbing beneath the clear skin, with the great masses of now lustreless hair wreathed gracefully round the temples, the closed eyes as yet seeing no baseless visions but the fantasies of hope.

She did not wake, and so her husband left her, going out upon the dreary wharf under the uprising of the dreary dawn, with the old man standing in the doorway as before he came and the cold rain beating upon his face.

CHAPTER III.

"STILL pouring," grumbled Josiah Snidgery disgustedly, "blowed if it ain't!" And he got between the sheets again.

Josh Snidgery, though remarkably

assiduous in his own particular line of business, was neither by habit nor predilection an early riser; and thus being assured by personal observation that the weather did not tempt to an early morning stroll, he resigned himself with tolerable content to lying on his back and listening to the tokens which, floating up from Little Joseph Street, proclaimed another day.

To say the truth, Josh Snidgery lost little by this sloth,—always assuming that his income did not suffer—for Little Joseph Street, Westminster, wherein he had pitched his tent, was neither a salubrious nor a beautiful thoroughfare under the most favourable auspices. When its causeway lay ankle-deep in mud, its gutters ran in muddy freshets, and its pavements collected muddy pools, it would have challenged comparisons for hideous discomfort with any highway in London, which is saying a good deal. There must have been many happy men resident in Little Joseph Street, every one of them with quivers full to the point of overflowing through their respective front-doors into the street. Children abounded; dirty, stunted, horribly shrewd, horribly clamorous and quarrelsome. On summer evenings one waded through children to reach Josh Snidgery's abode, as now it was necessary to wade through mud. Another apparent characteristic of the neighbourhood, which its indigent presentment would not seem to warrant, was a universal appetite for literature and a corresponding conviction that the best way to dispose of it, when done with, was to distribute it about the street in the form of detached sheets. There was as much flow of traffic as might have been expected, but no more, for Little Joseph Street stood somewhat back from the centre of commercial Westminster, trending toward the least busy stretch of the river bank,

and so in effect leading nowhere, as if it were ashamed of its fall, and crept from observation because it remembered the time when its houses were not let out in one-room tenements, but resounded to the laughter of fine ladies and gentlemen in the periwigged days of old. Moreover there were few shops, and none of those conglomerate incongruities known as Stores, within its confines; the public-houses also were few, as the usual apportionment goes, and never an assembly-hall was there to attract the itinerant concert-monger or stump-orator. So Little Joseph Street had its good points, as has the lamest duck of them all, if one only looks long enough, and with one eye closed.

Josh Snidgery's house stood a yard or two back from the pavement, and was girt with an iron railing originally constructed to guard the unwary passer-by from precipitating himself into the area; a railing subsequently broken in many parts, but retaining its horizontal upper bar intact. From this bar the ubiquitous children hung swings upon occasion, hurtling themselves backwards and forwards in calm disregard of the area yawning ten feet below. They never fell and dashed out their brains. If they had done so, it might be pardonable to question whether anyone would have wept; for, by all the rules of logic and common-sense, parents who showed so profound a disregard of economic proportion in bringing superfluous progeny into the world should have been equally callous as to their leaving it. However, there the bar remained, a source of infantile and uproarious joy.

It was a blank, wall-eyed house, exceeding dirty and depressed in demeanour, as well it might be. A short flight of steps led up to the door, at the side of which three bell-handles, placed one below the other,

dangled from their sockets. They never responded to the pull, and never had done so within the memory of man; but it amused the urban brats to tug at the knobs, when they knew Josh Snidgery to be abroad, and bawl opprobrious epithets through the key-hole because they received no tinkling response. Upon the hither side of the wall was painted, in letters which time and smoke had partially effaced, the laconic inscription BEDS: and underneath, in characters of similar dimensions, some local wit, or lacerated lodger, had added in chalk the simple but significant comment: FLEAS.

Neither announcement disturbed the soul of Josh Snidgery at the present juncture. He lay in bed, a greasy cap on his head, smoking and listening to sundry indications which betokened the rising and departure of his guests. He did not cater for an exalted class: such as deposited the necessary equivalent for enjoying his hospitality, began their day early, before their host was usually awake, that is to say; and their commerce with him consisted solely, as he himself expressed it, in "squaring up on the nail." Beyond that, his factotums,—a married couple of surprising vigilance generally, and in particular of a vision which could detect the surreptitious blanket beneath any coat worn by man—conjointly fulfilled the obligations of hospitality and domestic service.

It grew broader daylight, if such a description could be applied to the indeterminate lifting of the gloom, and the rain slackened. Josh Snidgery filled another pipe, casting about meanwhile as to how he could communicate with his underling, with the view of ordering a breakfast, and yet at the same time avoid physical exertion. Banging on the floor would not do it; that would only infuriate

the lodger below, and besides it meant getting out of bed; shouting was equally inefficacious he knew from previous attempts, and whistling had proved deceptive before now. There seemed no option but to rise and dress, but chance came to his rescue in the shape of a thump at his door and a beery voice demanding information as to whether he was "hup."

"No, I ain't," roared Snidgery. "What d'yer want?"

A gruff mumble distilled through the crack of the door destroyed the response of all similarity to human speech.

"Come in, and don't stand grunting outside, you bagpipe!" shouted the master pleasantly.

The owner of the beery voice insinuated himself round the door in accordance with this request, disclosing the beery person of the male factotum, a man of few words.

"What's up now?" demanded Snidgery.

"Man to see yer."

"Ain't he got no name?"

No, he had no name, it appeared, nor any specific object to confess.

"Seedy, of course?" observed Snidgery with unerring prescience.

The male functionary breathed hard; but that was one of his peculiarities and expressed nothing. It was not a debatable question; other than seedy persons did not come his way.

"Send him up," said Snidgery, who was not burdened with superabundant delicacy, false or otherwise; "and some grub; heggs, mind."

To save a double journey, the visitor was not ushered into the presence until the eggs were ready. They arrived together,—the visitor seedy as he had been pronounced, cold, and seemingly by no means overjoyed at the encounter; the breakfast

hot, and, to persons whose fastidiousness lay not in the direction of gross plenty, greasily appetising.

"I'll attend to you in a minute, mister," observed Snidgery; "just wait till I've took off the edge."

This respite from conversation apparently suited the visitor's humour. He nodded, and walked to the window whence he could survey the endless tide of human beings setting backwards and forwards—all restless, all, save the ubiquitous children, with some pursuit or ambition, all hurrying forward toward some goal, all, even the newsboys bawling hoarsely, with some interest, large or small, whereby grist came to the mill or hope waited on consummation. It was odd that the stranger, being comparatively young, should watch it with so much detachment, indeed with a sort of dreary scorn, being also shabby, and therefore presumably alien to the influences that generate boredom. Yet he had a sanguine face, too, when it lighted up, as it did when a philanthropic couple, incongruously out of place in the busy throng, strolled into view round a corner. The sky showed tentative patches of blue, but their joint umbrella was still up (for ulterior reasons, possibly,) and they walked, arm in arm, very close together beneath it, dawdling, ridiculously unconscious of the outside world, and with some intimate topic of conversation between them which brought the lips of one very close to the other's ear. So early in the morning, too! Love's young dream indeed, and, because of its extreme youth, fond of impracticable seasons to attack established customs; also because Love must e'en rise betimes and seize his opportunities when drudgery endures for the day and weariness cometh with the evening. The shabby stranger followed them with his eyes until they were out of sight, and then the

mirthless look settled down upon his face again.

Josh Snidgery, meanwhile, in no-wise incommoded by company, fell to work upon his breakfast with the best of appetites. When he had finished, and his pipe was in full blast again, he turned to his visitor.

"Hi, you there, why can't you come at a reasonable hour?" he began. "It needs a pretty tight fix to excuse business before breakfast, and therefore more interest, by gum! How much is it?"

The stranger turned himself about with a start, and advanced into the middle of the room. "You don't remember me?"

"Blowed if I do," replied Snidgery, staring at him doubtfully. "Wait a minute, though—"

"Anthony Smith."

"So 'tis! Come here and shake hands."

Anthony complied without effusion, and refused an invitation to have a snack, even when he was assured that it should be brought up, fresh and hot, from the kitchen.

"Well, if you won't, you won't," observed Snidgery, getting out of bed and enveloping himself in a dirty dressing-gown previous to his ablutions. "If you go hungry, it's your own look out. Take all you can get and eat all you can hold, is my motto. It's evident it ain't yours, or you'd be looking better. Why, you're as thin as a herring, and look twenty years older'n when you was married. Touring don't agree with *you*, that's plain, and I don't wonder at it; idiots and bouncers, I call 'em, who chuck up any job, however small, for touring, and so they are. Never mind about that, though, Smith, I'm glad enough to see you at any time, and gladder still if you've turned it up."

"I have come to ask a favour," began Anthony.

"Eh!" said Snidgery, suspending the operation of smearing his face with a sponge.

"Which is, whether you can let me lie down on a couch for a few hours. There is no room at my father-in-law's; and I do not feel up to looking for a cheap lodging until I have had some rest."

Let the cynic say what he may, it is indisputable that, so long as it costs him nothing, the average man is always willing to perform a kindly action towards his neighbour; the operation creates a genial glow of self-satisfaction, beside throwing upon the other's shoulders a useful sense of obligation which may be subsequently turned to account. So Snidgery, having a room to spare, bestirred himself with philanthropic activity; he conducted Anthony thither himself immediately, sent up a meal, ordered another blanket, and generally comported himself expansively. The room was neither commodious, airy, nor over-clean, to be sure; but Anthony was too tired to remark upon these slight drawbacks, even mentally, and too anxious to rid himself of his host's presence to indulge in garrulous gratitude. He wanted to rest, if possible, to be alone for a time at all costs, and he heaved a deep sigh of relief when Snidgery withdrew. It was premature; Josh put his head in again.

"Ave you made up your mind to turn up petticoat government for good and all, or is this merely a temporary job?" he enquired abruptly. Anthony feigned sleep. "A square peg in a round hole, that's what you are," remarked Snidgery; "like a good many more I've seen,—and all of 'em come croppers." With this flower of philosophy, culled from the field of a shrewd, if coarse, observation, Mr. Snidgery betook himself to his office on the ground-floor.

CHAPTER IV.

BESIDES renting a large dilapidated house, and letting it out in tenements (wherefrom an arithmetically-disposed lodger, smarting under a sense of injury as regards the cost of his accommodation, had once computed an annual profit of four thousand per cent.) Mr. Snidgery dabbled in another source of revenue,—to wit, money-lending in a small way. This paid even better than the house, and, as he managed it, was almost as safe. His ambitions were not large, so that, while he forewent the splendid possibilities of his congeners in the West End, his clients, among the better class of artisans and small tradesmen, required no display, threatened him with no risk of large bad debts, and suited his lack of education and the amenities of polite society generally. He sailed less near the wind by eschewing *post-obits* and by leaving bill-broking severely alone; moreover, he could bully more freely customers unaccustomed to look for refinement, and to be able to bully without fear of retaliation is a precious gift. Thus Josh Snidgery flourished: his few wants he could gratify to the uttermost; his bitterest enemies admitted he must have a sight of money laid by; his few friends were not relations to interestedly await his demise.

Into his office, though it was not a busy day with him, being the beginning of the week, numerous supplicants managed to find their way during his known hours of business; and though, as has been said, they were chiefly artisans and small tradesmen, an unconcerned spectator might have recognised an approximation of type to the visitors of Solomon Levi, the great financier in Jermyn Street, whose ledgers shut down upon an array of names calculated to turn an

American millionaire sick with envy. Substitute fustian and thread for broadcloth and silk, the language and manners of the East for those of the West End, and there was mighty little difference. The spend-thrift appeared, at his last shilling, as usual,—or guinea, as the case might be—and went away grumbling, as usual; the sly and shifty, who needed careful watching, as he had a wonderful trick of self-effacement when settling-time came; the servile and lachrymose; the blustering; the seeming-courageous who began stentoriously and subsided suddenly,—a representative of each came, though it was the beginning of the week, and Josh Snidgery, conversing with them in their own dialect, made his trifle out of them all, actually or in perspective, or sent them empty away. In the early afternoon his business was over and the books put by, so that when Anthony reappeared he was prepared for any moderate and inexpensive relaxation.

"Sit down," he said jocosely; "no charge for a chair to Scripture Soffit's son-in-law, any more than there is for a bed so long as one's empty. You always was precious mum about yourself, Smith, but I suppose that's nat'ral enough, seeing how little your marriage can have pleased the high-and-mighty relations you must have somewhere; but—"

"I have not one in the world, Mr. Snidgery," interposed Anthony.

"Get on!"

"Honestly, not one."

"Not one honestly, eh?" rejoined Snidgery with a grin. "What about Haggie?"

"You know what I mean, man," retorted Anthony shortly, sleep having banished some of his former dejection. He had received Snidgery's hospitality, and hoped, however distasteful the thought might be, to

secure his assistance in another direction. To give way to irritation was hardly therefore the best way to recommend himself, and accordingly he apologised for his rudeness.

"Bosh!" replied Snidgery. "What do I care for your rudeness, or your apologies either? You're sore at her having led you to make a fool of yourself, and at the whole thing busting up. It's enough to make a man short; it would me, I know. Well, and what are you going to do now?"

"On my soul, I don't know," replied Anthony.

"Neither do I, if that's what you mean, as I suppose it is," said Snidgery with a shrewd glance at him. "I'm not agoing to lend you money, mind; the security ain't good enough, and I never lend to friends." Here Josh wagged his head with infinite expression, quite indifferent to the young man's angry gesture of protest, and continued: "What about work? You're fit for none I know of. And what about Haggie,—will she get an engagement in London?"

Anthony bit his lips in silence and looked away. Snidgery's was not a countenance from which to expect sympathy, even if one wanted it, and to derive any æsthetic pleasure from contemplating it required imagination of no ordinary flexibility. Snidgery's eyes were close together and keen,—to enlarge upon them would require depreciatory adjectives; his cheeks threw out a growth of luxuriant red whisker, perennially uncombed; his teeth, such as remained, were miniature presentments of those discoloured vegetable products known as snags, and were exhibited to advantage in a large mouth. His whole appearance was rather Bohemian than precise.

"Won't she?" he persisted.

"No; never again."

"Why, how's that?"

"Nor anywhere else. I cannot look to her for co-operation, though Heaven knows I never wanted to. She is ill."

"Incurable, eh?"

"I fear so."

A light broke in upon Snidgery. "Has she gone off her nut?" he enquired. "Well, well, to think of that now! 'Owever, I always thought she would, and I've told Scripture so, more'n once. He is too beetle-headed; he give in to her too much and didn't keep her down enough when she was a child; I've told him that too, a thousand times. What's the good of those high-flying notions above her station? I ain't got 'em, and look at me! Mind yer, Smith, I think you 'elped by running after her, though you won't own to being her better. Bosh, I say. Each stick to your own rank; marriages like yours ruin both the man and the woman."

"There is no need to talk like this," said Anthony slowly, as if he were endeavouring to control himself.

"Oh, go on," retorted Snidgery; "don't tell me. I can see through a brick wall as far as most. How are you going to support her and old Scripture, each about as useful as the other? Mind, you've never told me anything about yourself, nor yet, I believe, have you told anybody else, but I'll lay 'arf a sovereign you no more know a good solid trade than I know Chinese. Come now, do yer?"

"You do not put one into a favourable mood for trenching further upon your good offices, Mr. Snidgery," said Anthony, rising; "perhaps that is your intention."

"Hulloa! where are you off to?" cried Snidgery, absolutely impervious to the irony.

"The wharf. I must talk to them there."

"Lot of good that will do,"

observed Snidgery. "However, I'll come too, and talk to the lot of you; I ain't seen the old man for two months."

They set out together, silently enough in all conscience, Anthony buried in gloomy thought, and Snidgery also immersed, to all seeming, in abstract calculations which might have concerned his companion, for he glanced at him unheeded now and then; yet while the former pursued his way oblivious to his surroundings and the obloquy of wayfarers he jostled against, Snidgery was alert the whole time and pushed forward dexterously even in the moments of deepest preoccupation. They lengthened the journey to Rosebank Wharf by making a detour to call upon one of Snidgery's friends. He went inside, leaving Anthony to stroll listlessly up and down a long terrace of dun, pinched-looking houses, with much linen hanging to dry in the areas, and fly-blown tickets in the front windows announcing *Furnished Apartments*. A hackney cab, after zigzagging tortuously from one side to the other, rumbled towards him and pulled up in a sort of heap, as hackney cabs, for some inexplicable reason, have a habit of doing. A spare gentleman jumped out, being followed by a female figure which was small and delicate and stepped lightly. The spare gentleman (who could not boast much in the way of height, either) seemed to lack small change, for he unbuttoned his brown surtout and groped in various pockets before he could collect the fare.

"Wot's this?" enquired the hackney coachman, holding the coin at arm's-length in his palm, and so blending indignation and injured innocence in the interrogation that he could without prejudice follow either line as the event should determine.

"Your fare," replied the spare

gentleman, speaking in a voice spare and sharp like himself. He turned round as he did so, and Anthony noticed that he had a spare, suspicious face, with a large grey moustache. "None of your nonsense, now, but hand down that luggage." By this complimentary designation was indicated a small deal box perched upon the top.

"No, you don't, old cock," retorted the coachman; "and up another tizzy and the box is yours, otherwise, I goes off to the nearest magistrate and claims my rights. *That*, from Paddington Station!" he flung the coin on the roof of the cab and pointed at it scornfully; "blimey, it's next thing to a bilk!"

The spare gentleman retorted to this indictment by standing upon tip-toe and grabbing at the baggage. Alas, he was too short; the baggage reposed beyond his reach, and the coachman crowed victoriously.

"Out with the tanner!" he shouted, enjoying himself very much. "Out—out—out, old bilker, or I'll have the law of you!"

"Oh, papa, give it to him!" cried the spare gentleman's companion; "there will be a crowd round us directly!"

"My dear, how the devil can I?" said the spare gentleman angrily, desisting from his fruitless efforts and staring about for aid. "I've only got a fourpenny-bit left to last until to-morrow."

This was spoken in a low voice for her ear alone, but in a voice, as has been said, naturally sharp, so that Anthony, who had drawn near, heard both question and reply; and noticed also that a small pair of very white hands were clasped together in perturbation,—at the man's insults, he thought, but also because she must have seen he overheard the brief colloquy. He did not labour under the

same physical disabilities as the spare gentleman. Before the coachman could interpose, or decide upon a further line of action, he had coolly lifted the box down (it was no heavy weight) and placed it upon the pavement.

"Off you go," he said to the embarrassed coachman, "before you are kicked for your impudence."

That worthy gathered up his reins with all speed, and departed, bawling over his shoulder, as a parting shot: "Such as you didn't ought to be allowed to live! When are they going to bur-r-rn yer?"

"Sir," said the spare gentleman, turning to Anthony with great dignity, "I am infinitely obliged; partly on my own account, but chiefly because your prompt intervention has secured my daughter from witnessing the thrashing it would have been my duty to give that scoundrel, and from hearing the flood of profanity there is only too good reason to expect would have followed. Allow me,—my card." His eye fell upon Anthony's shabby exterior, and his tone changed abruptly. "That is—er—I am infinitely obliged, as I said before. Good-day, ahem!" Here he coughed violently, perhaps to cover a little natural confusion, and picked up the box.

Anthony coloured hotly as he bowed. Something he was unable to quell hinted maliciously that it would have been more in consonance with appearances to touch his hat; and he could have done so ironically, but the spare gentleman's daughter did not follow him at once.

"I am very grateful to you," she said quickly, though the voice sounded more merry, or capricious, or both, than burdened by obligation. "We are, that is to say."

"My dear," called the spare gentleman, inserting his key in the lock.

"Coming, papa."

Anthony bowed once more. A little wind, a straggler from last night's storm, gambolled down the street, and swept the veil partly from her face—how young it was, and fresh! from the hair clustering under her bonnet—how bright it was, with the westering sun touching the tresses, golden like her girlish voice! He laughed at these vagrant fancies

to himself, and forgot them the moment after, for there was Josh Snidgery emerging from his mission a few doors down and beckoning to him. They were antipathetic forces, Snidgery and poetry.

"Come on," said Josh, "or else we sha'n't be there afore bedtime, and you'll be telling the old man it's my fault."

(To be continued.)

THE BATTLE OF MEEANEE.

THE victory of Meeanee, which gave the province of Scinde to the British Empire, was full of interest and, in certain respects, unique ; but it has never yet, I venture to think, been adequately described, and has now perhaps somewhat slipped from men's memories. Sir William Napier's account, one of the most picturesque of his battle-pieces, was not taken seriously by Sir Charles's officers. Even the sober narrative which General Waddington contributed to the *ROYAL ENGINEERS' PROFESSIONAL PAPERS*, though almost wholly free from errors, omitted to notice some of the most distinctive features of the action. Ten years ago I told the story with some approximation to the truth in a biography of Sir Charles Napier, which formed a part of a volume called *FOUR FAMOUS SOLDIERS*. Afterwards, in revising this biography, I examined a valuable document, of the existence of which I had not previously been aware : I also consulted the late General Petrie and the late Sir Montagu McMurdo, both of whom answered my questions with the most patient kindness ; and I found that I had made mistakes in points of detail and that I had failed to note one of the most characteristic aspects of the battle. I therefore corrected and in great part re-wrote my narrative. When it was finished, I read it to Sir Montagu McMurdo, who told me that he was unable to detect a mistake. In my biography of Sir Charles I have described fully and accurately the train of political events that led up to the battle. Here I am concerned only with the battle itself.

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On the 16th of February, 1843, Sir Charles Napier was encamped at Muttaree in Lower Scinde, on the right bank of the Indus. The negotiations which he and Major Outram had carried on with the Ameers of Scinde were at an end, and a battle was now inevitable. A large force of Beloochees with fourteen guns was, as he knew, encamped about ten miles south of Muttaree, on the banks of the Fullalee, a tributary of the Indus. His own force consisted of the 22nd, now known as the Cheshire Regiment, three regiments of native infantry and three of native cavalry, a detachment of Madras Sappers, four nine-pounder and four six-pounder guns, and four howitzers. After making due allowance for the protection of his baggage, he would not be able to lead into action more than thirteen hundred and fifty infantry soldiers, not counting commissioned officers, and seven hundred cavalry.

At four o'clock on the morning of the 17th the army began to move. The Scinde Horse, followed by the Sappers, led the way. The road, a mere beaten track, traversed a plain of white silt, broken at intervals by dry water-courses. Much time was spent in crossing these obstacles, for most of the guns were drawn by camels, and, as these animals cannot pull up-hill, it was necessary to cut down the banks and shovel the earth into the bed, so as to make a level road. After a march of seven miles the advanced guard approached the Fullalee, the bed of which was then dry, the eastern bank lying on their right, parallel to their line of march.

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Suddenly, as they tramped along, the silence was broken by the roar of a distant cannon. The General promptly formed up the infantry of his advanced guard behind a small canal, unlimbered two guns, which accompanied him, and sent the Scinde Horse to reconnoitre on both banks of the Fullalee. Presently it was ascertained that the enemy were in front, and the march was resumed. About eight o'clock the enemy's camp was descried. Some distance ahead, on the nearer bank of the Fullalee, a large wood stretched over the plain, and further off, on the left front, was a grove of mango-trees. The wood was bounded by a high mud wall, on the top of which were perched hundreds of matchlockmen. Along the further limit of the space between the wood and the grove extended the enemy's host, and their guns were placed in two masses, covering their flanks. The view was as yet imperfect, and Captain John Jacob rode on with the Scinde Horse to reconnoitre the ground on the left front.

Napier now halted to wait for the main column, which had been delayed by the badness of the road. At length it arrived, and the whole army continued to advance until it came within three hundred yards of the wall. Napier saw that to turn the wood was useless, if not impossible; for he would have to cross the Fullalee under the enemy's fire, and, when he had gained the further bank, to force his way through a wood which would destroy all formation. The column therefore wheeled to the right into line. The Artillery, flanked by the Sappers, were on the right. Next to them stood the 22nd Regiment, numbering about five hundred, half of whom were Irishmen. Next came successively the 25th and the 12th Bombay Native Infantry and the 1st Bombay Grenadiers. The left of the

line was covered by the Scinde Horse, and in reserve behind the right were the 9th Bengal Light Cavalry.

Meanwhile Napier swept the field with his telescope. A round-shot pitched at his horse's feet, but did no harm. The matchlockmen had disappeared from off the wall before the formation of the British line; and he concluded that there were no loopholes for them to shoot through and no scaffolding to aid them in firing over the top. But he could now discern that there was a village in the grove on his left front, and the chances were that it was occupied in force. Presently Jacob rode up and reported that on the further side of the grove there was a deep *nullah* with scarped sides, swarming with men. If it was impossible to turn the wood, it was equally impossible to turn the village. There was but one way to fight the battle,—to attack the enemy boldly in front. Thirty thousand warriors were there, many of them drunk with *bháng*, every man of them inspired by fanaticism and hate; and against this host he could lead no more than a bare three thousand, of whom less than a fourth were British soldiers.

It was half-past ten before the line was ready. Then, under a brisk cannonade from the enemy, the British guns were moved forward, while the infantry advanced in echelon from the right; the left was thus refused in order to avoid the fire from the village. Skirmishers were thrown out to search the ground in front, and try whether an attack in flank was to be expected from the wood. Two hundred yards further on the gunners opened fire, but the range was too great; a little further, and they tried again; this time with more success. Three hundred yards from the enemy's line they unlimbered for the third time, and, after a short sharp duel, silenced their

slackening cannonade. Meanwhile the General, as he rode with his Staff past the wood, was disturbed by thoughts of the danger which it might bring forth. There was an opening in the wall, through which he feared that the ambushed matchlockmen would rush out upon his rear. One thought after another came into his mind, only to be rejected,—till a happy inspiration seized him. Placing a company of the 22nd just inside the opening, he bade their captain, Tew, to keep it blocked, and never to give way. Hardly had the order been given when Tew was shot dead; but to the last the gap was held.

And now the infantry regiments, still formed in echelon, were dressed in preparation for the final advance. The baggage, guarded by the Poona Horse and four companies of native infantry, was formed in a circle, close behind the line of battle, the camels lying down around it, and bales being placed between them, so as to form a rampart over which the guard might aim. The bugles sounded, and as under a galling matchlock-fire the regiments moved on, the enemy abandoned their guns. Encouraged by the rattle of their comrades' musketry, the 22nd marched past the wall. Suddenly the General saw that before him, winding from behind the wood at right angles to its former course, was the bed of the Fullalee; and the dark faces of the Beloochees appeared above the edge, bending over their levelled matchlocks. The host who had been seen before were in reserve on the plain beyond. The guns were run forward to within a few feet of the bank; but, owing to an outward bend in the wall, there was no room for more than four. The General gave the word: the measured tramp quickened; and with a loud hurrah the British soldiers charged. Racing to the edge of the bank, they were

about to leap down, when they saw a myriad swaying sabres flashing in the sunlight before their faces, and in amazement staggered back. They knew that they could not overbear that ponderous phalanx of swordsmen. For a time indeed they stood their ground, and kept up a rolling fire of musketry; but they soon saw that they were uselessly exposing themselves to the fire of the Beloochees who knelt behind the foremost rank. Their officers commanded, implored them to charge again; but unheeding, they recoiled some eight or ten paces, advancing only to deliver their fire, and the Sepoy regiments on the left followed their example. Again and again, as the British guns roared out, a hail of grapeshot flew diagonally down the river-bed, and hurtled through the dense masses of the Beloochees; while along the bank the shouts of the striving multitudes, the sharp reports of musket and matchlock, were mingled with the frequent clash of the bayonet and the sword. Twice or three times the Sepoy regiments were violently hurled back, and even the British swerved before the rush of their desperate foes. Officers and men were falling fast, and it seemed doubtful how the day would go. Then, conspicuous among the thronging combatants, appeared the eagle face of the British General; driving his horse through the ranks of the 22nd, and waving his helmet, he called upon the men to make one charge for victory. Still it was in vain; the bayonet alone could not decide the battle. But now the soldiers were becoming cooler and more confident. Gradually they had beaten down the fire of the front rank. Planting themselves, three or four at a time, almost on the edge of the bank, and only stepping back to reload, they shot into the striving mass with such swiftness that, as the

foremost rolled over dead or dying, those behind could hardly spring clear of the corpses and aim before a fresh volley hurled them also back. Fainter and fainter grew the fire which they returned, so cumbrous was the matchlock in comparison with the musket. At times indeed, maddened by those steady volleys, knots of clansmen would drop their matchlocks, rush over the bank and fling themselves with sword and shield upon the line; but their efforts were without discipline or concert, and the British, easily lapping round their flanks, always drove them back again over the edge. In the narrow space, barely ten yards wide, that separated the contending hosts, Napier slowly walked his horse up and down, more than once scorched by the fire, though never struck, and always at hand to rally the wavering.

Heaps of writhing bodies were lying close under the bank, and still the Beloochees would not give way. Moreover, the officer commanding the Bombay Grenadiers, misunderstanding his instructions, had kept his men in the original echelon position, where they were of little use. Captain Jacob with the Scinde Horse had made a bold attempt to turn the grove on the left; but the deep *nullah* and the jungle were impassable, and he was obliged to return. The crisis had arrived. Now or never, Napier saw, the battle must be won. Exhorting his men to hold their ground, he sent an order to Colonel Pattle, his second-in-command, to charge with all the cavalry on the enemy's right flank. The Bengal regiment had already crossed over from the right in support of the infantry, and was now not more than thirty paces behind the left of the line. Presently a body of turbaned horsemen was seen streaming in single file between the

village and the Grenadiers. While the third squadron of the 9th drove masses of the enemy to the left, into and along the bed of the river, and the second expelled numbers from the village enclosures, the first, with the Scinde Horse, rode straight for the further bank. As they galloped across the plain near the village, some fifty of the Scinde horsemen, failing to clear the ditches that intersected it, were flung from their saddles; but the rest, spurring on, dashed over the bank of the river, across its bed, and on to the plain beyond; and then, while the Bengal troopers fell upon the masses in front of them, the Scinde Horse charged the camp of the Ameers, swept down upon their reserves, and threw the whole array into confusion. Distracted by this unexpected onslaught, the front ranks in the Fullalee hesitated; the British infantry saw the wavering of their line, and, springing forward with a triumphant shout, forced them back from the bank till the fighting was renewed in the middle of the river-bed. The Sappers had made a breach in the wall: one of the four guns had thus been brought to bear upon the masses whom Tew's company had held in check; and now, driven out of the wood by the fire, they joined the left of the line. With desperate fierceness the conquered Beloochees still fought on, but at last they knew that they were beaten; and turning, though still glancing grimly round, with a swinging stride they slowly stalked away. Large bodies indeed still lingered near the village, and looked as though they would make another rush; and it was not until the whole of the British guns had been turned upon them that they too sullenly dispersed.

The loss of the Beloochees was very severe. Within a circle of fifty

paces' radius four hundred corpses were counted; and in all not less than two thousand had fallen. But Napier had won his victory at a heavy cost. Of his little army sixty-two officers and men had been killed, and a hundred and ninety-four wounded.

Such was the battle of Meeanee. Napier's leading has been enthusiastically extolled, and I do not know that any fault has been found with his dispositions; yet in a sense Meeanee was a soldiers' battle. The officers fought like gallant gentlemen, but they, perhaps even their war-worn chief, did not at first comprehend the conditions of the combat; and if the men had followed their lead, the battle might not have been won. Sir Montagu McMurdo, who himself leaped into the river-bed and there slew four Beloochees in single combat, told me as much. "I don't like," he said, "to speak of myself; but when the battle began, I was full of the idea that the bayonet could carry everything before it, and it seemed to me disgraceful that the men should recoil as they did. I advanced several times to the edge of the Fullalee, and ordered and entreated them for God's sake to follow. But they knew what they were about, and they fought the battle quite right. They knew that they would be throwing away their lives to no purpose if they attempted to carry the position with the bayonet; and at last they got tired of hearing me tell them to advance. 'Mr. McMurdo,' some of them called out, 'Mr. McMurdo, if you don't leave off, we'll shoot you.'" Napier's foresight in placing Tew

to hold the gap in the wood; the superiority of the British artillery and of the musket over the match-lock; the coolness and good sense of the British infantry; the timely order which Napier sent to Pattle; and, above all, disciplined combination prevailing over isolated valour, — these were the chief factors in the victory of Meeanee. And, if Sir Richard Burton is to be believed, judicious bribery counted for a good deal; Sir Charles, we are told, had spent secret service-money in corrupting the Ameers' artillerymen. McMurdo, on the other hand, who was his son-in-law and possessed his confidence, told me that he had never heard anything of the kind. What is certain is that neither generalship, nor courage, nor superior weapons, nor even corruption would have availed if the Beloochees had formed, not a loose gathering of clans, but a compact host. Referring to the rushes which they made over the bank, Sir Montagu wrote to me: "Had these been combined, —that is, simultaneous along their line,—I cannot say confidently what would have happened; we were so weak numerically, with no supports even. Happily they were tribe rushes. . . . It will be understood then that the width of front of such isolated charges seldom exceeded that of one of our companies . . . the men of the companies on either side (and therefore free of this pressure) lapped on either flank of the Belooch chargers [*sic*], and roughly handled them with the bayonet."

T. RICE HOLMES.

STEVENSON'S LETTERS.

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON; selected and edited by Sidney Colvin. Two volumes; London, 1899.

ACCORDING to the adage the world once knew little of its greatest men; but this reproach, if reproach it be, is being speedily removed. We run the risk indeed of knowing too much about all men, both great and small; and whatever be our definition of greatness our curiosity is seldom disappointed. The fatal lack of reticence, which has already debauched the Daily Press, is creeping into literature, and the fact that a man has put pen to paper seems warrant enough for uncovering his most private life and most secret thoughts. It is a sorry, indiscreet doctrine, and it may carry us further along the road of indiscretion than we can as yet foresee. Not only may the editors of letters do an unwilling injustice to the dead; they may also turn the lamp of ridicule upon the living. Moreover the danger is greater to-day than ever it was; for to-day the smallest achievement means notoriety. The modern writer is not allowed to live, as he lived in the time of Ennius, in the mouths of men; he must also face an abashed existence in the newspapers. His movements must be chronicled, his house described, and no sooner is he dead than all his letters that have survived the flames are collected and presented to the world. Fame, indeed, is too apt to be translated into eavesdropping, and it is strange that men of letters should be the unhappiest victims. For literature

is a craft which, pursued in private, makes no instant appeal to the practical citizen, and there seems no reason why the writer should be more widely discussed than the barrister, for instance, or the cheese-monger. "As for the art that we practise," said Stevenson with perfect insight, "I have never been able to see why its professors should be respected. They chose the primrose path; when they found it was not all primroses, but some of it brambly, and much of it uphill, they began to think and to speak of themselves as holy martyrs. But a man is never martyred in any honest sense in the pursuit of his pleasure; and *delirium tremens* has more of the honour of the cross." That is sound sense, soundly expressed, and it will be a good thing when the man of letters is merely praised for whatever good work he achieves, and is left to live his life in decent obscurity.

These reflections are suggested by what appears to us the over-hasty publication of Mr. Stevenson's letters. He has been dead but five years: the most of his correspondents are still in our midst; and we cannot overlook the inconvenience involved in asking the whole world to share the confidences of a few. That Stevenson had no thought of publication is abundantly proved. When one of his letters was inadvertently published, he wrote an instant protest. "You scarce appreciate," said

he, "how disagreeable it is to have your private affairs and unguarded expressions getting into print. It would soon sicken any one of writing letters." It is true, on the other hand, that he desired a selection of his letters and a sketch of his life to be prepared for publication; but possibly he did not contemplate so swift a realisation of his wish, and perhaps the letters without the life, to which they might have served for a commentary, appear too intimate. At any rate, having read the two volumes, and found a part at least of them vastly entertaining, we cannot shake off a feeling of intrusion. Why, indeed, should we know the thoughts and affections of a man whom we never saw? He did not write these letters for the eye of whomsoever chooses to buy the book. He poured out his personal views of life and men and art in his letters, and he put into his leisurely literature such opinions as he desired to express to the world. The one set of documents supplements the other,—that is true, but have we the right to look over a man's shoulder as he writes to his friends? Moreover, the book suffers from a kind of monotony: the same opinions are expressed, the same journeys described in half-a-dozen letters; and the work might have been reduced by one-half without any loss to the reader, while many a brief note to publishers and others might surely have been omitted.

However, here we have so large a sheaf of letters as has been gathered from the correspondence of no other of our generation, and when once we have overcome our feeling of indiscretion we may enjoy the wit, fancy, and judgment of the author. Now Stevenson is loudly proclaimed in his own books; and his character, partially sketched in the letters,

awakens no surprise. The letters confirm the impression of his deliberate works. Before all things Stevenson was romantic, the legitimate offspring of 1830. For all his love of the classics, for all his interest in the English language, which he handled like the exquisite he was, he appears in these letters the fervent champion of romance. The elder Dumas is his hero; for M. Zola, himself as romantic as Stevenson, he has no word of praise. "The curious, eminently bourgeois, and eminently French creature has power of a kind. But I would he were deleted. I would not give a chapter of old Dumas (meaning himself, not his collaborators) for the whole boiling of the Zolas." So he professed a keener joy in life than in literature; as who would not? So he found his home among the Polynesians, whom he loved and understood. "But O, I love the Polynesian," he wrote; "this civilisation of ours is a dingy, ungentelemanly business; it drops out too much of man, and too much of that the very beauty of the poor beast; who has his beauties in spite of Zola and Co." And as he was romantic, so also he was quixotic. Not even his ill-health could deter him from the ambition of enterprise, and in 1886 he seriously proposed to take the Curtins' farm in Ireland. "All the manhood of England and of the world," said he, "stands aghast before a threat of murder." Therefore, he argued that as his work could be done anywhere, as moreover his life was always precarious, as "nobody else is taking up this obvious and crying duty," he should set sail straightway for Ireland, and take upon himself the crafty, murderous hatred of the agitators. It was a splendid scheme of sacrifice, splendidly imagined, and one wishes that he had not been

dissuaded from its execution. He might have failed: he might perchance have even drawn upon himself the bullet of the assassin; but he would also have obeyed the most generous impulse, and it is possible that his courage might have won the sympathy of the Irish. The same quixotism persuaded him to refuse the money once proffered for a story, on the ground that, having undertaken and failed to do his best work, he was not entitled to the promised reward. But so he is pictured on every page,—a man of lofty honour and unimpeached generosity, who did the best work he could, and was surprised at the adulation of the people.

Indeed, he accepted his success with an almost boyish astonishment. He was sure that his popularity could easily be explained on the principle that there was something wrong with him. But he delighted in it none the less, and poses in many a letter as "the literary swell" with an evident joyousness. At the same time he never took himself or his craft too seriously. "My skill deserts me, such as it is, or was," he once wrote from Vailima. "It was a very little dose of inspiration, and a very pretty trick of style long lost, improved by the most heroic industry." He clearly divined that he pleased the journalist, and declared with perfect frankness: "I do not think it is possible to have fewer illusions than I." At the outset he found great difficulty in writing. "Even now I cannot make things fall into sentences," he wrote; "they only sprawl over the paper in bald, orphan clauses." But the time came when his works knew no bald, orphan clauses, though even with certainty of hand he did not acquire a foolish pride in himself. He could write; he knew that. He could preach; he

knew that also. Wherefore he wrote and preached with the greatest content, and did not trouble his head severely concerning fame. "I know a little about fame now," he wrote from America; "it is no good compared to a yacht; and anyway there is more fame in a yacht, more genuine fame; to cross the Atlantic and to come to anchor in Newport (say) with the Union Jack, and go ashore for your letters, and hang about the pier with the holiday yachtsmen—that's fame, that's glory, and nobody can take it away; they can't say your book is bad; you have crossed the Atlantic." That is the proper attitude, and it reminds us of such stalwart men as Edward Fitzgerald, who have written, and written well, without thinking that they were archangels for their pains.

Of course the Letters contain many passages of excellent criticism, both of particular works and general principles, though it must be admitted that the sojourn in Samoa put many things in a wrong relation, and that near the end Stevenson extended an amiable tolerance towards all sorts, to whose works he would in earlier days have given a proper value. But he never lowered his standard of prose. "Prose," said he after Flaubert, "is never done;" and for all his love of adornment he loved also simplicity. "Beware of purple passages," he wrote to a colleague; . . . "wed yourself to a clean austerity. Wear a linen ephod, splendidly candid. Arrange its folds, but do not fasten it with any brooch. I swear to you, in your talking robes there should be no patch of adornment; and where the subject forces, let it force you no further than it must; and be ready with a twinkle of your pleasantry." That is a precious, yet wise condemnation of preciosity, and Stevenson, like many another, condemned

his own whim in others. On another page he gives a just judgment of *THE SPECTATOR*, which some foolish critics said was his inspiration. "I have tried to read *THE SPECTATOR*, which they all say I imitate, and, it's very wrong of me, I know—but I can't. It's all very fine, you know, and all that, but it's vapid." So also he admired concision, as we should have expected from his own practice. "Why," he asks, "was Jenkin an amateur in my eyes? . . . The reason is this: I never, or almost never, saw two pages of his work that I could not have put in one with no loss of material. That is the only test I know of writing. If there is anywhere a thing said in two sentences that could have been as clearly, and as engagingly and as forcibly said in one, then it's amateur's work. Then you will bring me up with old Dumas. Nay, the object of a story is to be long, to fill up hours; the story-teller's art of writing is to water out by continual invention, historical and technical, and yet not seem to water; seem on the other hand to practise that same art of conspicuous and declaratory condensation which is the proper art of writing." The main thesis is good; but the exception disproves rather than proves the rule. Montaigne, for instance, is as discursive as Dumas or Scott, and it is, we believe, a false distinction which would thus separate fiction from other forms of prose. Verbosity and concision are virtues, each in its place, but concision is the greater virtue, and verbosity can only justify itself by the stress of circumstances. However, whenever Stevenson criticises he prompts to argument, and it is fortunate that in most of his correspondence he reveals himself as a keen and strenuous critic of books.

For the rest the Letters wear a

somewhat solemn aspect. There is no doubt that Stevenson was always inclined to preach, to pontify, to be didactic. As pictured here he seems to have cultivated the lay-sermon rather more diligently than need be. We have often been told, indeed, that there was another side to him; once even, we believe, he was called an indelicate Ariel; but there is no hint of freedom, and not too many hints of spriteliness in these somewhat grave volumes. Of course you gather that Stevenson was supported in an arduous life by an indomitable courage, while here and there, especially when he drops into the Scottish tongue, you get a word of reckless gaiety; but this word is too seldom spoken, and the lasting impression of the book is severe and sombre. In description sometimes he is admirable, but then you feel he is anticipating the literary expression of what he has seen or heard; at other times he draws a character with rare discernment, and again you are reminded of his *MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS*. His description of Molokai is really eloquent, and a few lines concerning Father Damien, though they suggest his famous pamphlet and illustrate his favourite and sane theory that to do right is a hundred times better than not to do wrong, are ever memorable:

Of old Damien whose weaknesses and worse I heard fully, I think only the more. It was a European peasant: dirty, bigoted, untruthful, unwise, tricky, but superb with generosity, residual candour and fundamental good humour: convince him he had done wrong (it might take hours of insult) and he would undo what he had done and like his corrector the better. A man, with all the grime and paltriness of mankind, but a saint and hero all the more for that.

But perhaps the best letter of them all is a lament for his lost

friend, James Walter Ferrier. The first part of the letter is a paean to friendship, the last, which we quote, is a skilful and touching character :

I never knew a man so superior to himself as poor James Walter. The best of him only came as a vision, like Corsica from the Corniche. He never gave his best measure either morally or intellectually. The curse was on him. Even his friends did not know him but by fits. I have passed hours with him when he was so wise, good, and sweet, that I never knew the like of it in any other. And for a beautiful good humour he had no match. I remember breaking in upon him once with a whole red-hot story (in my worst manner), pouring words upon him by the hour about some truck not worth an egg that had befallen me; and suddenly, some half hour after, finding that the sweet fellow had some concern of his own of infinitely greater import, that he was patiently and smilingly waiting to consult me on. It sounds nothing; but the courtesy and unselfishness were perfect. It makes me rage to think how few knew him, and how many had the chance to sneer at their better. Well, he was not wasted, that we know; though if anything looked liker irony than this fitting of a man out with these rich qualities and faculties to be wrecked and aborted from the very stocks, I do not know the name of it. Yet we see that he has left an influence; the memory of his patient courtesy has often checked me in a rudeness; has it not you?

This is indeed a sure and graceful tribute to a friend, while the compliment in the last phrase is of the loftiest. It reminds us of Pope's famous line, than which it has been said literature knows no finer flattery, "Disdain whatever Carberry disdains;" yet is it not even higher praise to say of a dead friend that his patient courtesy is still a check upon rude behaviour?

We would that Stevenson's portrait had been drawn with equal candour. But Mr. Colvin is a Bossuet rather than a Boswell, and he has written a

eulogy which, eloquent and sympathetic as it is, leaves but a faint impression upon our mind. The real Stevenson has evaded the panegyric, and we feel of the letters as we feel of the preface, that it is not here we shall discover the author of *TREASURE ISLAND*. Yet to what purpose are letters printed save to reveal the complex character of him who wrote them? And now that we have read these eight hundred pages, how ill we understand their writer's personality! Of course we see that he is vivacious, brave under suffering, keenly enthusiastic for literature and the arts. But these are qualities which he shares with many others, and again we say that the real man has escaped from these two stately volumes. And this brings us to another question. How is it that Stevenson, who has been dead scarce five years, has so august a monument raised in his honour? There is no other man of his time who will be so bravely distinguished, and it is interesting to attempt an explanation of Stevenson's popularity. Accomplished as he was, he is less in stature than many men of whom the world knows nothing; nor did he ever make a definite appeal to the people's favour. Yet he has already passed into a legend, and the whole Press has conspired to advertise him. For him it is a temporary misfortune; time will sift his work, and permit us to contemplate his excellencies otherwise than on the bended knee. But for the moment he suffers a patent injustice. He has been painted in such colours of blue and white as no man ever wore, and the least word written by his hand has been as reverently criticised as though it were part of an ancient classic. The time has not come to pass a judgment upon him. His works will remain to find the place which they deserve; but meanwhile

we may wonder what it is that has aroused the general enthusiasm. It can hardly be his works, because the delicate humour and style of his essays, the dainty colour of his shorter stories will always elude the vulgar. Nor is it as a writer of boyish romance that he thus takes his place in the people's fancy. Probably it is the adventure of his life, the tragedy of his sickness, which have won him so wide a sympathy. The curious public, which is slow to discover literary talent, is always attracted by the enterprise and suffering of those who write; it would always rather applaud its hero on a side issue, and find that admirable which the hero has accomplished away from the profession of his life. So Robert Louis Stevenson has grown into a figure of romance, more wonderful than any of his own creations. He has been pictured among the natives of Samoa, whose politics he made a vain attempt to shape; he has been heard of in the highlands of America or in the remote Marquesas. In fact, he aroused

an enthusiasm which would have been unfelt had he lived out his quiet days in London or Edinburgh; and the journalists, misled by a false interest, praised him with more zeal than discretion. Thus it has come about that his letters are printed with as much respect as though they were Shakespeare's or Fielding's. But still the real Stevenson is hidden from our view. The letters, interesting and animated as some of them are, show but one side of the man; while as for the writer, we prefer to go back to his books, which we know have received the last polish or revision which his delicate hand could give them. In a hundred years, perhaps, the letters may be invaluable documents, or, should the popularity supposed by their publication decline, they may lie among the forgotten books. But whatever be their fate, is it not premature to print them now? The passing years might have lifted the weight of reticence, and though old letters are often as precious as old wines, is not last year's vintage apt to taste a little crude?

CONTINENTAL FIGURE-SKATING.

FIGURE-SKATERS may be roughly divided into two classes, those born and those bred to the pursuit, and a difference will always be noticeable between the two. The born skater shows an originality and vivacity in his performance, which can never be emulated by the skater who has been made by dint of taking pains and hard work; the latter will always be somewhat stiff and somewhat too academic in his movements. For both, however, constant practice is necessary on approved lines before any degree of perfection can be reached. A skater may be able to perform many things owing to natural strength of ankle, power of balance, and nerve; but there will be still something lacking in his performance if he does not study the best way of using these natural advantages.

The rules of correct form in English figure-skating are strictly laid down, but even more strict are those of the Continental styles. One reason of this is that in England there are no very distinct schools of skating; in fact it may be said that there are only two, the pure English and the Anglo-Swiss. Between these two there are at most but small differences, the latter adding some few niceties to the art which are not insisted on in the former; in the main they are the same. On the Continent things are very different, owing to the differences of nationality. Each nation has its own peculiar style, and even in one particular country there may be several distinct schools, each of which teaches and upholds some special modifications of the general

national style. All, however, begin their teaching from one fixed point, as it were. This rule with which all the foreign schools commence is that the employed leg, that is the one on which the skater is performing, shall be kept bent at the knee. This is the exact opposite to the first rule of all English skating.

Starting then from this common point, Continental skaters vary a good deal in other respects, according to the particular school which they may represent. The different styles may be called the French, the Swedish, the Austrian, the Hungarian, the German, the Russian, and the mixed Swedish-Viennese. The various styles emanate from the clubs formed at Paris, Stockholm, Vienna, Buda-Pesth, Berlin, Munich, and St. Petersburg.

In Continental skating generally there is first to be considered the employed leg on the position of which all are agreed, and then the carriage of the unemployed leg, of the arms, the body, the hands, and the head. It is in connection with these latter parts of the body that the differences of the various styles arise.

The French school is the product of covered rink-skating, and is chiefly marked by its *abandon*. There are virtually no fixed rules for the carriage of the arms and unemployed leg. The knee of the unemployed leg is very much bent; the arms are held away from the body almost shoulder-high; the body itself is inclined forward; the unemployed leg is carried at a considerable distance from the employed, swinging stiffly with very little bend at the knee. The style

is remarkable for its agility rather than for its grace. There is on the whole, thanks perhaps to the natural exuberance of the race, too much freedom and too little restraint. Their skating is somewhat of the nature of the *can-can*.

The Swedish school approximates to the French, but is marked by much greater reserve. The arms are kept lower, breast-high at most; the employed leg is less bent; the unemployed is kept more under control, and is not used with the stiff clumsy swing of the French; it is more bent at the knee, and is gracefully posed with the toe pointing downwards and the knee turned outwards. Generally, the carriage of the body is more upright, and the whole motion is more subdued, although still retaining great freedom. The figures executed in both the French and Swedish styles are more noticeable for their originality, and cleverness of execution, than for their grace or accuracy. Skaters of these two schools are apt to be somewhat rough and at times almost uncouth. Of the pure Swedish school Herr Grenander is probably the finest exponent; he is remarkable for the variety and brilliant execution of his figures.

Turning to the skaters of Central Europe, the Austrian school, exemplified by that of Vienna, is perhaps the best known, and the majority of skaters who have achieved much of late years have been imitators of this style. Much of the freedom of the French and Swedish schools is lost, but there is great gain in a certain graceful reserve, and in the added accuracy. The rules of the Viennese school are strictly laid down. Arms should be carried waist-high; the unemployed leg must be kept fairly close to the employed, toe down, knee slightly bent and turned outwards; the body is held very upright. In-

deed this style is very much more in accordance with the generally accepted ideas of good skating as conceived in England. On inside forward and inside back edges the unemployed foot is held in front of and nearly over the employed foot, a position which adds to the graceful appearance. The Viennese skaters are also particular about the carriage of the hands. They must be open not clenched, the leading hand slightly turned palm upwards, the other turned downwards. The chief fault noticeable in some exponents of this school is that of stiffness. Their skating may be made almost too academic, and there is at times a noticeable effort to conform with the rules laid down. The Viennese skate their figures large, very accurately, but somewhat slowly.

We find German skating represented by the two schools of Berlin and Munich. The former has not of late produced any skaters of very great merit, and as a school lacks something in originality. Their style is moulded on that of the Viennese, but they fall short of this standard by a want of accuracy and neatness. The Berliners are slightly less academic, however, than the Viennese, allowing more freedom in the use of the unemployed leg and of the arms.

Munich also follows nearly the same lines as Vienna, but is even more academic. The arms are held lower, but the hands do not meet with the same careful consideration that they do from Viennese skaters. The unemployed foot is held closer to the employed than is the rule of the rival school, and the unemployed foot is generally kept close to, and slightly behind the employed.

Buda-Pesth has not been very prominent in the foreign skating world of late, though some very fine performers have hailed from there. Their style is more free than that of Vienna,

and their figures are skated with more pace and more dash. As for the individual parts of the body, the Hungarians follow the example of the Viennese, but allow more freedom and, generally speaking, show more individuality.

St. Petersburg has produced but few good skaters. The school also is moulded on that of Vienna, but is more free. Indeed the Viennese school may be said to have set the model for the whole of Central Europe. At present the finest representatives of these various styles of skating are Herr Hügel of Vienna and Herr Fucks of Munich. The last-mentioned school of skating, the mixed Swedish-Viennese, is most happily exemplified in Herr Salchow of Stockholm. Here the academic stiffness of Vienna and Munich is avoided; the over-exuberance of the French and pure Swedish schools, shown in the sometimes exaggerated motion of the arms and legs, is modified, and most of what is best in the two styles seems to have been combined to form one. In this Swedish-Viennese style the body is held upright, legs moderately wide apart, arms waist-high but allowed to move upwards if necessary with a graceful and quiet swing. The unemployed leg is slightly bent toe downwards, and is carried in front of or behind the employed as the particular turn necessitates. There is no appearance of jerk; every motion is made with a graceful, steady swing of the extended arms, and with a steady even raising or lowering of the unemployed leg.

Throughout Continental skating the most noticeable features are the arms, since they are carried high and extended from the body, and the unemployed leg, since it is carried at a considerable distance from the employed, and does most of the work when a turn is executed. Consequently these are the first two things that catch the eye of the critic. The arms, which call

attention to the general carriage of the upper half of the body, must never be allowed to move with a jerk. They mark, as it were, the direction of motion and follow or sometimes even precede the rotation of the body, emphasising the rhythm. And so they must move easily and steadily with an even swing. The unemployed leg can very easily look ungraceful, often from the skater's misfortune rather than from his fault, but in whatever position it is placed, the first thing to avoid is any appearance of a kick in changing that position. As it moves it must do so slowly with a swinging motion, not rapidly with a kick. These points represent the most important differences between English and Continental skating, for in the English style the arms and unemployed leg should attract as little attention as possible.

At first sight to an Englishman this arm and leg work of the foreign skaters appears unnecessary and ungraceful, but it must be remembered that English and foreign skaters perform with very different objects. The Englishman learns to skate chiefly for the exercise, and for the pleasure he himself experiences in overcoming difficulties. He takes his pleasures sadly, considering merely this gain of exercise and his individual merit, not taking much account of spectators, but content to judge for himself of his performance, himself playing critic to himself. The Continental skater, though doubtless no less eager to arrive at excellence, thinks firstly of the spectators and critics, skating especially for their good opinion, and to give them some sensation of pleasure at sight of a thing so well done. It follows that an Englishman does not consider a difficult thing well done until, to the casual observer, it appears to be very easy, and to have needed no extraordinary effort. The foreigner,

on the other hand, makes an easy feat appear difficult, at once raising in the spectator feelings of astonishment and admiration. Since then the Continental skater is performing for the pleasure of the spectators, he will skate small, intricate figures which can at once be examined and appreciated by the surrounding audience. Consequently foreign skaters use skates very much more curved than those usually adopted in England. They do not wish to make large curves, but prefer to have their figures on a small scale, compact. The ordinary radius of the skates used abroad is five feet, or even less; many patterns are made with mixed radii, five and a half or six feet in the middle of the blade, and four and a half at the extremities. In some cases the middle part of the blade is made broader than at the ends, which has the effect of further reducing the working radius. The skates are often finished with a small spike at the extremity of the toe, on which are performed the wonderful toe-spins to which foreigners are much addicted.

As the result of these small radii the figures described on such skates must necessarily be of small dimensions, what in England would be called picture-figures. The Continental skaters do at times indeed skate big turns at high-speed, but although the edges before and after the turns are very clean cut and true, yet there is always considerable appearance of effort about such performances, and a decided jerk. There must be some contortion of the body and some lack of grace in the carriage and a too decided movement of the unemployed leg, in order to overcome the natural tendency to move on a curve of small radius.

The Continental skates are also made higher off the ice than English patterns, so that the skater can get

very hard on to an edge, without running the risk of his boot coming into contact with the ice. The body is therefore often very much inclined from the vertical towards the ice, and the skate seems to grind into the ice, leaving very deep and true cuts. All the turns (three, rocking-turns, bracket-turns, counter-turns) are executed almost entirely by the use of the arms and of the unemployed leg. The swing of the arms gives the required direction of rotation, and the twist of the unemployed foot, raised or lowered at the same moment, is the main factor in executing the actual turn. The body is allowed to take up any position that is most natural. This is again directly opposed to the English style, where the turn is done by the body-swing and by the ankle-work of the employed foot, without the external aids, as it were, of the arms and unemployed foot.

The Continental skaters excel in loops, cross-cuts, pig's-ears, toe-spins, and pirouettes. These loops and cross-cuts are made by a steady rhythmical swing of the unemployed leg, the foot rising or falling as each stop or new edge is made in the cross-cut, and revolving steadily round the employed leg in the making of loops. Very hard set meanwhile on the edges, the skater makes and keeps up his pace by means of this swing. The toe-spins and pirouettes are wonderful exhibitions of clever balancing. They are skated at great pace. In the toe-spins one hand is lifted above the head, pointing vertically upwards. This assists to keep the centre of gravity of the body directly over the small surface of contact between the skate and the ice. Of these figures one of the finest is that known as Hügel's Spin, more commonly called the cork-screw. Starting with a powerful stroke of the outside forward edge, and inclining his body very much over from the

vertical, Herr Hügel starts the spin with a strong swing of the unemployed leg. The arms are extended at right angles to the body, and assist to keep up the momentum. As the spin progresses, and as the pace of rotation increases, the arms are gradually lowered, and the employed leg, hitherto kept rigid, is gradually bent. The unemployed foot, having now swung in front of the employed, is grasped by the two hands. The spin is continued in this position, the employed leg becoming more and more bent, until the skater is almost in a sitting position. The unemployed leg is, as it were, coiled round the employed, the foot still held in both hands just clear of the ice. Then the employed leg is gradually straightened again; the unemployed foot is released; one arm is lifted above the head, and the skater ends the figure with an ordinary toe-spin. Another figure, which is included in the *repertoire* of nearly all expert Continental skaters, is the spread-eagle. This as usually executed in England is very ugly; the feet are kept apart and in the same straight line, heel to heel, by a great and unnatural effort. The knees are bent and the whole body seems to be contending against the contortion. The foreigners do it apparently without effort, legs absolutely straight, body perfectly upright, and arms folded across the chest. Discussing their superiority in this figure with a great Viennese skater, I was informed by him that he was in the habit of standing in stocks, constructed specially for the purpose, for two hours daily throughout the summer months, in order to accustom his legs to the required position. And this seems to have been the method adopted by most of the skaters to achieve this figure.

On the whole the Continental skaters are most remarkable for their

originality and individuality. Each skater has a large selection of fancy figures, peculiar to himself in many cases, forming beautiful and symmetrical patterns, and the individuality of the man is very marked in his selection of figures. One skater will indulge in a wild riot of spins, grapevines, and pirouettes, while another will perform intricate patterns on a small scale, quietly, but with wonderful execution. All foreign skaters are also accustomed to skate to music. In England the only combination of skating and music is instanced in waltzing on the ice, and it is comparatively rare to find two skaters, who are waltzing, also paying very much attention to the music. The music is an excuse for the waltz, but seems hardly to be a necessary part of it. Abroad there are an infinite number of pretty steps all invented for the purpose of being skated to music, and depending on the strict accuracy of the time-keeping for their good effect. These steps are generally for single skaters, but there are also pretty arrangements of them for two or more performers. The figures introduce grapevines, mohawks, and spread-eagles, the majority of them being what are generally known as two-foot figures. Throughout the performance perfect time is kept to the music, and a rhythmical swing is imparted to the motion of the arms and of the body which is most pleasing to watch.

Continental skating is to English skating very much as continental dancing is compared with English dancing. Englishmen usually dance either a smooth, fairly fast waltz, not always particularly graceful in itself, or else a rather furious hop-waltz. The smooth waltz gives at any rate an appearance of power and of control over the feet; it may be made very graceful, without any undue appear-

ance of effort, and allows of beautiful steering. The hop variety is not elegant, but is cheery and very exhausting; as hard exercise it has certainly great merit. Abroad the hop is general, but it is done quietly; the steps are pretty and very neat, and perfect time is kept. Not much ground is covered, but there is plenty of animation and swing about it, even though it be on a small scale. It is so with the skating. The Englishman shows power and dash with a certain clumsiness perhaps, or else with so little apparent effort that the real difficulty is not generally noticed. His curves are big, strong and smooth. The Continental skaters exhibit neatness, rhythm, and execution, but it is all on a somewhat small scale.

In the matter of costume foreign skaters are far ahead of us. We

English folk wear our ordinary everyday dress for skating, with loose coats, and trousers that crease and fold with every motion of the body; or else we take to knickerbockers, whereby is produced a somewhat startling contrast between the upper and lower parts of the leg. Abroad the skaters wear tight-fitting coats, and clothe their lower limbs in tights, or else in close-fitting trousers, with high boots or hessians as foot-gear. The costume shows up the lines of the figure, emphasises the rhythmical motion of the body, and calls attention to every nicety of the swinging motion of the unemployed leg. It is clothing the body so that it may, for the particular art of skating, look most attractive.

GEORGE WOOD.

THE BLIZZARD.

THOSE who have only seen the soft, wet English snow, dear to the juvenile mind from its association with snow-balling and figure-making, can have little idea how terrible an enemy it is in those regions where the intense cold converts the beautiful element, as it falls, into fine dust which no endeavour will bind together, where each tiny crystal of this dust is frozen into a glittering speck of ice scarcely larger than the point of a needle, and almost as sharp. It is true that most of us have at one time or another been inconvenienced by the snow and slush of these latitudes: trains are stopped, traffic impeded, and communications interrupted; but these trifles are very different from the state of things in Manitoba, Assiniboia, Athabasca, and Saskatchewan, the true home of the blizzard, where the frozen white dust is often caught up in a raging torrent of wind, travelling perhaps some forty miles an hour, at a temperature of, say, thirty degrees below zero, which is another way of saying sixty-two degrees of frost. It seems wonderful that anyone should be able to live for even a minute in such a storm of death; and of course it would be impossible were there a suspicion of moisture in the atmosphere, but many are compelled to make the attempt; some succeed, others fail; how, many people on this side have little idea, for though news of a blizzard may be reported briefly in the English newspapers, the names of those who have perished are concealed as far as possible.

I am going to confine my remarks

to the blizzard on the prairie. It may begin in different ways. I have known it spring up quite suddenly on a clear winter's day, but generally it gives some sign of its coming, often by a strange and ominous silence lasting sometimes for an hour or more. There seems to be no life in Nature; there is not the slightest motion in the trees or bushes, not a stir in the air, and not a sound, unless animals are close at hand, for they know what is coming and cry uneasily. Then, with the utmost suddenness, the blizzard strikes. All may be peace one minute, pandemonium the next; clear and bright one moment, a raging, freezing grey-black night the next. The contrast defies description. The blizzard in which Johnson, the mail-driver on the route between Troy and Fort Qu'Appelle, was caught came up somewhat as follows.

In the early morning it was beautifully bright and peaceful. Between the hours of eight and nine several solar *coronæ* and numbers of fine rainbows were visible, and there was a clear mirage, the inverted houses of the Fort with the frozen lake, along the horizon. Gradually the sun grew more feeble, the colours died out, and at noon the light became partially choked by a rolling mass of grey cloud, through which the sun glowed like a blood-red ball before being blotted out. The clouds drifted thicker and closer, the darkness increased, and a great silence fell over the prairie. I looked from the doorway of the little Troy hotel, the windows of which were sheeted with an armour-plating of ice, and watched

little spiral flurries of snow-crystals rising up at every point, travelling along a few yards, then dropping with equal suddenness. It is a wonderful sight that, and can only be seen in regions where the cold is sufficiently intense to convert the snow into dust. These spiral columns would spring up in the midst of perfect stillness, sweep along like an advancing army of genii, then suddenly disappear, only to rise again as suddenly at another point. It is a magical phenomenon, not caused by wind, but by the breath, as it were, of the coming storm; it is one of Nature's kindly ways of warning her children that danger is at hand. I noticed, also, that the masses of cloud were dropping, and that a strange darkness was forming between earth and sky; the spiral flurries became indistinct, and livid, if I may use the word,—I can think of no better. Next I heard a low moaning, and before I could stir there was a mighty rushing and a roar, and a furious cloud of ice-crystals cut me across the face. The wind shrieked, the houses shook, the woodwork creaked and groaned. The snow sprang into the wind, and formed an impenetrable curtain through which no eye could pierce. Earth, sky, and atmosphere assumed the same appearance, a grey raging torrent of blinding snow. Inside the house little eddies of snow were dancing wildly about the boards, and the cold was fearful. Now and then there would be a rush towards the door, a furious scuffling, a regular tempest of wind and dust and a man would burst in, his beard and eyebrows ice-bound, and crystals glittering on every hair of his furs.

Johnson has described his terrible journey for us. He had covered ten miles, half his stage, when the blizzard struck him. He was of

course well wrapped up, and owned one of the finest buffalo-coats in the country; so he made himself as snug as possible, whipped up the horses, and for some time made fair progress, as he was travelling with the storm. It was impossible to see anything, but he was an old hand, and could tell by instinct whether the runners were gliding over a trail or the rough prairie. Presently the horses became invisible; his face was covered with a grotesque mask of snow that had clung to the warmth of his flesh and frozen there, and great lumps of ice hung to his beard and moustache. Still on he went, thinking doubtless (as all do in similar circumstances) of the warmth and comfort awaiting him when he reached shelter. On and on the horses struggled, until three-quarters of the distance had been covered, and his spirits rose with the thought that he was well able to control his movements, and, if nothing happened, could last the journey. But that something *did* happen. Presently there was a plunge of the off-side horse; the sleigh half stopped; there was another plunge, and now Johnson realised that there was trouble. He tied the reins to the front bar of the sleigh and crept out, keeping his back well to the stream of snow. A trace had become unhitched. He fumbled with it, but he was a little heavy and stupid with the cold, and he could not refasten it with his mitts on. He pulled them off, put them in the sleigh, and took up the trace, though its contact froze his fingers. How it happened he never could tell. He hitched the trace, and staggered to the sleigh, but for some reason the horses suddenly took fright and bolted. He caught wildly at the side of the sleigh, but was knocked back into the snow. He struggled up again and shouted for help, but there was nothing in

sight, nothing except the whirling snow. The sleigh had gone, with it his mitts, and with them both his hope of life. Yet he made a splendid effort. He dragged himself along the snow-piled trail, and in some wonderful way his instinct never failed him; but his hands were soon frozen, and his arms became useless appendages hanging like lead to his body. There was a farmer's shanty not a mile away. He kept on, staggering blindly beneath the storm, sometimes walking, sometimes crawling, but fighting always against the deadly inclination to drop down and sleep; he knew that continued motion was his only chance, poor as it was, and he kept moving, though his senses were well-nigh dead. And he reached the shanty; he fell against the door, and the farmer heard his pitiful sounds, and dragged him inside. Seeing his condition he kept him well away from the fatal heat of the stove, stripped him, and placed him in a tub of ice and snow, in the hope of preserving his frozen limbs.

So far as I know Johnson is still alive. Both his arms were cut off and both his legs; but decomposition was arrested by these awful measures, and, as I say, he may be living today,—if it can be called life.

When the blizzard has dropped, the inhabitants of each settlement often go out and search the bluffs and snow-hills for the bodies of any who may be reported missing. Terrible are the discoveries sometimes made by these bands, as the following instances will show.

I was a member of one such search-party after a short but very violent blizzard. We had tramped into a bluff, on our way to a shanty where we hoped to obtain refreshment, when the leader stopped suddenly, and called out. I looked where he pointed, but saw only a thick patch of willow

scrub. "What is it?" I asked of the man beside me. "Don't you see," he replied, "over there, side of that poplar?" Then I saw. It was a very dreadful, yet in its way rather a beautiful sight. The bluff was piled up with the unbroken snow with all its crests and ridges, and the bare trees were covered with white wind-ing-sheets. Huddled up against the trunk of a poplar was the figure of a boy, his hands clasped round his knees, his head resting sideways upon his arms; he crouched there, motionless in that silence, as though he were fast asleep, though we knew too well the meaning of that sleep. On approaching we found that he was frozen through and through, for all the world like a block of marble. We had to carry him away in that crouching position, and he was buried as he died. He was the son of a neighbouring farmer, and we heard that he had gone after a wolf just before the commencement of the blizzard. He must have lost his way, and wandered into the bluff, where he had sunk exhausted by the tree, and finally succumbed to the fatal sleep.

Still more sad was the case of Daddy Peters, as he was called, a kindly old soul, who lived on a little farm with his old wife Mammy, both of whom were always glad to welcome a visitor. Daddy's stables were about fifty yards from his shanty, and during the blizzard he insisted on going out to attend to the requirements of his stock. Mammy entered a strong protest, but Daddy, who, like many old men, became angry and stubborn at any suggestion that his powers were failing him, stuck to his purpose. He wrapped himself up and went out into the storm. They found him next morning, not ten yards from his own door. He had reached the stables, and done his duty there. This had probably numbed him, and

when he tried to get back he must have lost his way. It sounds ridiculous to say so, but when a man cannot see a yard in any direction, and all his surroundings are exactly the same, what can he do, except go by instinct? Daddy's instinct had served him; he had found the barbed wire fence, which ran up within a few feet of the shanty, and he had felt his way along by this. When found his poor old face was covered with frozen blood; the flesh had been torn by the cruel barbs when the storm had thrown his body against the wires. Mammy was unconscious and half-frozen by the side of a dead stove, but she luckily recovered.

I have noticed that women can, as a rule, endure extreme temperatures better than men. The following incident of Widow Baker and her two sons is a case in point.

This old lady lived on a farm in North-Western Manitoba, together with her sons, young men both, the eldest not over five-and-twenty. Her husband had been dead about a year when the catastrophe occurred; the boys had given up their own half section and had brought their stock and implements to the old place to farm it for their mother. One day in March a violent blizzard sprang up suddenly, and in the midst of it the great box-stove in the kitchen fell over,—not a very uncommon accident, but in this case the risk had been increased, for one of the supports had come off, and its place had been taken by a large stone, which probably had become shifted. The stove-door burst open, and blazing logs and red-hot embers showered forth, rapidly igniting everything. The young men were outside, necessarily braving the elements, as they were short of fuel. The widow lost her head and did a very foolish thing; she threw

open the house-door and then the storm-door, but forgot to close the former when she called out for her sons. Of course the wind, rushing wildly into the house, completed the disaster, and the little wooden shanty was soon ablaze. Fortunately the boys were close at hand; they rushed in, and managed to save some bedding and furs, but it was quite impossible to attempt to save the house. There was no shelter within three miles, while the blizzard was increasing in violence every minute; their horses had been turned out for the winter, with the exception of one, who had lately (misfortunes never come singly) gone dead lame; oxen were of course useless. They did the only thing possible. They wrapped up their mother as well as they could, put her in a small out-house, and then lashing on the snow-shoes they had saved from the fire, started off for help. Nobody ever saw them alive again. They became hopelessly lost, wandered away from the trail, and finally succumbed to the storm. Mrs. Baker was discovered the next day, completely buried in snow at the fair-weather side of a pile of logs, but alive and not frozen. She narrated her adventures. After being in the out-house for some time it had been turned over by the almost solid wind; none the worse for the tumble she crept out, crawled on hands and knees to the log-pile, and there buried herself. The full fury of the wind was spent upon the icy covering that protected her, and she escaped unhurt, to mourn the loss of her two sons and her home.

Besides actually recorded tragedies the blizzard is responsible for more than one mysterious disappearance. A man may be missed, and seen no more; his place is deserted, but to

all appearance he had no intention of leaving it. Later it may become known that he went about the time of a blizzard, and then people understand, and wonder where and when they will discover it. At a little colony in central Assiniboia a young English fellow vanished in this strange manner about the time of a blizzard. Search was made for his body, but in vain; the spring thaw came, cultivation took place, but they never found his remains. His farm and effects were sold by the instruction of his father in England, and the young man was forgotten. On the fourth spring after his disappearance, a farmer was driving his team of oxen along a trail in the neighbourhood, when the brutes suddenly broke off across the prairie (a very common trick with oxen, let me say,) and dashed into a dried swamp, where thick strong grass was springing up from the still marshy soil, the farmer swearing and beating them across their noses in orthodox Western style. Midway the wheels of the waggon fastened into something that creaked and cracked. The farmer looked to see what it was, and to his horror discovered a skeleton. From certain articles found beside it some of the settlers had no difficulty in identifying the remains of the young Englishman, who had been lost in the blizzard four years earlier. Needless to say the bones were properly buried at once.

And now I come to speak about the most awful incident connected with a blizzard that has ever been brought within my knowledge. Those who have not had the opportunity of learning how greatly the human temperament can differ, may be inclined to disbelieve the following true story. Two half-bred trappers, Landreville and Cloutier, lived to-

gether in a wretched hut on the Great Saskatchewan river. Like most of their class they were morose silent men, unrefined, uneducated, true children of Nature. Landreville was especially taciturn, and I have been told that he would sometimes go through the day without speaking a word, preferring to make signs rather than to use his tongue. They were a curious couple, but I suppose they suited one another.

Factor M., who told me the grim story, was making his way on snow-shoes back to the fort, along the bed of the Saskatchewan, when the blizzard struck, a blizzard which was general from the Arctic Circle as far south as Dakota, and which was one of the most destructive that has ever scourged the country. The factor took shelter in the trapper's hut, the only place available. He found Cloutier engaged in making a pair of moccasins; Landreville, he was told, had been out since early morning, making a round of the traps. The factor made himself comfortable beside the fire, and when he failed to draw his host into conversation, took refuge in the consolation of his pipe. Outside the blizzard was raging with that fury which cannot be imagined unless it has been experienced; but Cloutier went on stolidly with his occupation, for it was not in the man's nature to show any anxiety about his companion. The factor began to grow sleepy, when the door suddenly burst open, and what looked like a polar bear crawled in. It was Landreville; round his neck were strung some martens he had taken from the traps; his snow-shoes were gone, for he had found them useless and had thrown them away. He did not say a word, but pulled off his ice-covered furs and settled himself by the fire; the factor noticed that he never stood up. Cloutier glanced up

once, and when he saw his companion, whom he had very likely given up as dead, he merely said, "Ho!" and went on with his work. Landreville pulled out his hunting-knife, then slowly removed his socks and mocassins. The factor looked and shivered at the sight of those bare feet, for they were both absolutely frozen and dead; and frozen flesh on a living man is a dreadful sight, with its cold cream-like, waxen appearance, but the factor had little idea what was about to take place. For when Landreville had sharpened the knife to his satisfaction, he bent down, and deliberately began to slowly carve off his right foot above the ankle.

It was a horrible, a sickening sight; the factor described it as the worst nightmare he had ever passed through. Once Landreville called to his companion for the axe,—but I had better not go into details. The right foot fell off, and then the silent man carved and chopped away at the left, while the stolid Cloutier went on stitching at the buckskin, as though cutting off one's own feet were an ordinary occupation. The whole thing is too dreadful to dwell upon, but it may be interesting as showing what a man, who has no nerves and no sensibility, is capable of doing. I will only add that Landreville failed to arrest the mortification engendered by the heat of the hut, and died in a few days.

Like almost everything else the blizzard has its humorous side, though the little gleams of comedy are as a rule lost in the dull black shadows of the tragedies. Turning up an old diary I find the following entry, under the heading, Tuesday, December 2nd: "Twenty below, when I went out to the stables. Colder still, and the snow falling in great masses Dakota way. Went to Egg Lake for hay (twenty-four miles). Blizzard

coming back. Never suffered more in my life." There does not appear to be much of a cheerful nature about these few remarks, and as a matter of fact, I did not myself see much humour in them at the time, though I have since laughed a good deal at the memory of that day's adventure.

I was working on a farm with an elderly Scotchman, a morose, red-nosed individual, who insisted, much to my disgust, on invariably regarding me as a mere boy. He had a wife and children living near Aberdeen, and if it were not drifting from my subject I should like to tell the story of his life, which was an uncommonly sad one; *was* I say, for he died tragically soon after we parted company, without setting eyes again on his family. We both worked for an English farmer, an inhuman creature, who made a point of sending us long trips across the prairie if the temperature was very low or a blizzard was impending. On this particular day we had orders to go to Egg Lake, a very desolate region, for hay. This hay is cut in the early summer, when the swamps are dry. It is stacked and left there until winter, when the farmer hauls it on his bob-sleighs to his farm as he requires it. As we had a long way to go, we were given the horses, which, though not nearly so strong as oxen, are much quicker, and after breakfast we started off with a cage-rack on the bobs, and a good solid snow-bed on the trails. It was bitterly cold all the way, and though we took turns in driving the horses and running along by the side of the sleigh to keep the circulation going, it was cruel work. We passed no human habitation on the road, and saw no signs of life, except clouds of snow-birds. When we reached the lake we loaded the rack, and then fell to on our lunch of bread and cheese. The former was frozen hard, though

we had kept it in our pockets, while there was a thin coating of ice over the cheese; but we got through it, and then set off for home again. P. had scarcely spoken a word to me all the time, but during the return journey, he turned and said, "See yon, laddie?" I looked, and perfectly understood that a blizzard was racing up, that we were about ten miles from home, and that I was absolutely numbed.

Before another half hour had passed we were in the thick of it. It was not a very violent storm, for we could see quite twenty-five yards in front, neither was the temperature phenomenal, as the mercury never dropped more than fifteen degrees below zero; yet I do not think I have ever been more miserably cold. I buried myself right in the hay, until I heard the voice of P., "Laddie, what's come to ye?" I dragged myself out, and could not help laughing when I saw my companion's face. His beard and moustache were a mass of ice, and underneath his fur cap his big red nose gleamed like a danger-signal through the rushing snow. "Hullo, Father Christmas!" I called out, but old P. had no sense of humour in him, and sternly rebuked my attempt at frivolity. "Do you no ken, laddie? It's a blizzard." "I know it is," I said. "Shall we do it?" He shook his snow-covered head ominously, and we dragged our miserable way on, while feeling gradually went out of my legs. "Laddie, we maun tramp it," said P. suddenly. I muttered something about the state of my limbs, and some harsh epithets concerning the storm, which roused my companion's ire. "Are ye no ashamed o' yourself, lyin' there with fear o' death before your

eyes, an' swear-words on your conscience? Laddie, ye need to pray, I'm thinkin'." Then he took me by the legs, and literally hauled me out of the hay. We unhitched the horses, abandoned the load, and struck towards home, using the animals as a protection against the rushing clouds of frozen snow.

I quite think it was owing to P.'s presence and his extraordinary remarks that I was saved from being very badly frozen, and perhaps losing something, that day; he kept me awake, and actually laughing, by his attempts to make me thoroughly grasp the extreme gravity of our position. For all that it was a terrible struggle with the elements. I kept stumbling with weariness, and once or twice fell altogether, and begged to be left, just for a few minutes' sleep. But P. was resolute. He continually quoted Scripture, and as continually pounded me with his fists, sometimes even with the butt-end of his hay-fork, which he carried to steady his footsteps. "Keep awake, laddie. Fight against the wiles o' Satan, an' he will flee from ye." This was the sort of thing that went on all the journey. Utterly exhausted, with scarcely strength left to crawl, we reached home, and when we got inside I fainted. When I came to, with a taste of corn-whisky in my mouth, P. was standing grimly near me, thawing out his hand in a basin of ice-cold water, and treating the farmer to a lecture on the ways of Providence. Poor old P.! I have laughed many a time, when I think of that strange journey. My own bites were painful, but they thawed out all right; my right ear, nose, and right hand, were the afflicted parts.

ERNEST G. HENHAM.

AMONG CHINESE MONASTERIES.

It was near Ningpo that I first assisted at a Chinese Buddhist service. We had been straying over hills glorious with azaleas of many colours in their full delicate bloom and perfect beauty. The most exquisite pink azalea hung over the great waterfall there, and caught some of the spray upon its blossoms as the stream turned over the edge for its first leap, the flowers constantly wavering with the breeze brought by the rushing waters. Wandering by beautiful Windermere in England I had read Miss Gordon Cumming's description of hill-sides striped and banded in colour with azaleas, and thought that some day I too must see them. The seasons had rolled round but twice, and now here was I already tired of pink azaleas, too smart, it seemed to me, for a mountain-side, and preferring the big orange flowers, or the deep red, or revelling in the long clusters of sweet-scented wistaria, that hung about like lovely ringlets, looking with exultation at osmundias among their opening fronds with the full vigour and health imparted to them by the spring, and delighting in the clumps of feathery, golden-stemmed bamboos, old friends of my childhood, yet admiring almost equally *Cunninghamia Sinensis* on its native heath. We plant little saplings of this last over here in our gardens, and boast of them. There they were tall and vigorous, and everywhere giving an Oriental character to the ferns and the azaleas, the bamboos and palms.

Then the rich sweet tones of the Buddhist bell summoned us, and we

slept, as it were prisoned, within the dark precincts of the monastery, not even through latticed windows catching any glimpse of external glories, till solemn sounds roused me in the early dawning, and I stole in at the back of the dark temple, and could hardly believe I was not in one of the Portuguese churches of my childhood. There knelt the priests with close-shaven heads, and long cloaks broched across the left breast, leaving the right arm bare, and formed of little oblong bits of old gold, or ashen grey, stitched together, thus symbolising at some expenditure of pains the poverty of rags. They prostrated themselves three times, touching their foreheads to the ground before the altar,—was it not? They bowed and knelt before the altar; they elevated the Host, or at least a cup, one ringing a bell meanwhile, the others prostrate in adoration. Could the resemblance be more perfect? They chanted a monotonous chant, (a Gregorian, as it seemed to me), and after many bowings and prostrations and beating of a dull, wooden gong in the form of a skull, moved in procession round and round before the altar, bowing as they passed, each with a rosary at his side, and solemnly chanting. There seemed to be no doubt about the words. I heard them quite distinctly: *Domine, ora pro nobis, ora, ora!* Then *gloria! gloria!* swelled out. And meanwhile, though passing me at intervals so closely that I could feel the rustle of their robes, not a priest there seemed to perceive my presence, but all went by with shaven heads, and eyes bowed down, and fingers and

palms close pressed together. A strange feeling came over me, as if I were dreaming. Had the azaleas intoxicated me? Was I in the far-away Madeira of my childhood? Were those not Portuguese Roman Catholic priests, not Chinese Buddhists? Were they praying really,—to our Father in Heaven,—or are there more gods than one? If not, they were worshipping and I was not. And this worship had gone on after this fashion for thousands of years, long before Christ walked the earth and lived and died for men. I knelt in prayer behind the Buddhist priests; and then I saw the figure of the Virgin with the Holy Child upon her knee. They call her Kwanyin, Goddess of Mercy.

Outside the door stood two beautiful *Salisburia Adiantifolia*, the sacred tree of the Japanese. The breeze rustled through their graceful leaves, resembling the lobes of the maiden-hair, and I felt that they could tell me all about it, if they could only speak. The blue sky overhead tells no tales, and the azaleas were of yesterday. Then a young priest came up to question me, and to ask me if I could say *Omito Fo*. Blessed is Buddha, I took it to mean, and assuredly he must be blessed, if ever man were, for the good that he has done for his kind. But since then I hear that learned men attribute various meanings to the phrase, and their meanings I do not understand, nor I am sure that these priests would understand them; they did not look very clever. I meant what they meant. "Our Temple wants new tiles, *Omito Fo*. We are very poor, *Omito Fo*." Praise-God-Barebones meant the same, I fancy, by his Praise God. But Buddha was a man, I hear someone say. Well, then go to Thibet, and tell me what the uninstructed Thibetan means, as he walks along the streets murmuring, "*Om*

Mani Padmi Hum (the Jewel is in the Lotus)." What does he mean by saying it, wise man? I do not ask what you think the words may originally have signified or symbolised; is not its meaning now, *Praise the Lord of Life*?

The next monastery we visited was the stately Tien Dong. Avenues of magnificent trees led up to it, squares with giant trees enclosing them, terraces and ponds with the sacred lotus. The entrance and approach prepared one for more than man could ever realise inside. The Parthenon would have looked small and the Pantheon empty after that approach. As it was I certainly did not think much of the temples, and the guest-rooms were dark. But the trees behind were beautiful, and had enticing paths leading on into the woods.

There was a well-dressed Chinaman going in. He proved to be captain of a man-of-war, and, with some reason for acquaintance with us, he asked if we should like to be introduced to his particular friend, the Chief Priest. Within the inner courts there was a blush-rose peony plant covered with blossom, before which the Post-Captain stood in rapt adoration. It was evident that he had really brought us to show us this, as one of the wonders of the world. The Chinese specially esteem peonies of this shade of colour; and indeed it was a lovely sight and must have carried off the prize wherever it was exhibited, so carefully had it been grown and so completely was it covered with blossom. But I had seen flowers before, never a Buddhist High-Priest, nor a Chinese Post-Captain clad in long silk gown and high boots. The Post-Captain led us into the pleasant reception-room. On the couch sat a Mandarin we had met several times before, always wear-

ing a scowl and a magnificent gown of richly embossed cream-coloured satin. He scowled now, and without a feint of courtesy of any kind at once seated himself in the seat of honour. Then the Chief Priest came in, with nothing to indicate his grandeur beyond particularly civil manners. He had also a bustling cheeriness, which was probably all his own, not belonging to his office, as he begged us to sit at the round table and taste the various sweets with which it was spread. Delicious tea was now brought in, of a kind very costly even in China, scented with jasmine flowers. After having thus distributed hospitalities, pointed out the peony, and generally made us welcome, the Chief Priest bustled away, carrying off the Post-Captain with him. Then a comfortable-looking Ningpo merchant, spending a few days at the temple with his family, with that geniality which seems a Ningpo characteristic, began to introduce the various members of his family and to make friends generally; but the cream-coated gentleman still sat and scowled. It was disagreeable, and so, though everyone says one cannot, I determined to treat this scornful Mandarin as if he were after all a human being. Looking round with a bow and a smile, as if I had never noticed his rudeness, I took the seat indicated to me at the table, at which he had already seated himself. After all, a Mandarin is human; he looked surprised of course, but smiled too, and after that we saw his scowl no more, but received a very polite bow and smile when, after a little while, he went away.

Years passed, and I saw no more of monasteries, till we went to Omi's sacred mountain in the far West of China, where we stayed at the comparatively rich Temple of the Myriad Years. There were crowds of pilgrims

all the day and every day, grand rooms set apart for us (but with a most filthy kitchen), an elegant but strictly vegetarian repast (including some delicious *beignets* with pumpkin flowers inside), and at the end almost violence, in the shape of priestly rapacity begging for a contribution to their expenses, and showing us the startling sum given by some American missionaries, their last foreign visitors, who had occupied our rooms before us. There it stood, inscribed in beautiful Chinese characters in their visitors' book; but it turned out on subsequent enquiry to be a barefaced forgery. The American missionaries had paid for the accommodation they had received, and for nothing more.

At the next temple where we tried to spend the night, we were met by a point-blank refusal. The priests said their rooms were full. We might have believed them, had they risen to receive us and offered us tea; but meeting with cold incivility we believed rather that the Temple of the Elephants' Pool was too rich to be beguiled by foreign offerings into receiving heretics, and pushed on through the gathering night and rising mist, up and up along a *col* like a knife's edge and by beautiful trees, to a little temple, where they did their best to make us comfortable, according to our (to them most strange) tastes. After which they importuned us like beggars for some of A.'s old clothes, because the young priest in charge of the temple had set his foolish fancy on trying foreign garments, and like a child could not be turned from his point.

At the top of the mountain we spent a fortnight in the Golden Monastery. The priest, whose especial duty it was to entertain strangers, received us from the first with great courtesy, but he informed us that all our meals must be eaten

in the privacy of our own apartment. And as at first we had none,—for we could not (till we had tried all round and failed) resign ourselves to one room giving on to the mountain-side out of which it had been dug, and with only one window that did not open—this resulted in our taking our first meal in the open air upon the grass of the mountain-top; the monastery, however, very kindly supplying us with hot water for our tea. Then, finding no other temple could or would receive us, we promised to take no life while upon the sacred mountain, and only to eat our shocking foreign food in the one room assigned to us, having it cooked in the adjoining one given over to our two servants and eight coolies. The priests used to come in and out all day, offering us tea and sweetmeats; but they never would even drink tea out of our cups for fear of any defilement of previous milk still clinging round them.

That monastery struck us as both strict and carefully managed. The Chief Priest, who had the air and bearing of a saint, spent hours in solitary devotions in the temple on the verge of the great precipice that goes down for something like a mile from Omi's top; and up which the white mists float and fly, and roll and curl, or sometimes creep up like great bears, putting one foot before the other and peering cautiously over the edge, then coming on with a rush and a hot damp breath from the sweltering world below, that year writhing in the Cholera-King's embrace. All the temples on the mountain's top were burned down a few years ago, but they were being quickly rebuilt almost in a row, and presenting, at all events in their preliminary stage, much the same appearance as Canadian log-huts. But the exquisite bronze temple on

the edge of the precipice, to which every province in the Empire contributed, has never been rebuilt after its sad conflagration, and there still stand the beautiful fragments. Meanwhile the rough pine-wood edifices seem all at daggers drawn. One golden temple was bringing an action against another for placing a golden pinnacle as the centre ornament of its roof, thus building up a pretext to filch from it its immemorial golden title; while another temple accused ours of having intentionally lit the fire that consumed it. We did not believe this of our temple, for even its boy-priests were hard-working, good little lads; who knelt and burnt incense with reverence too. On the other hand, the young priests of the adjoining temples seemed bold, bad youths of ribald laughter, importunate curiosity, and great effrontery. There was, however, one other temple where the priests were always wrapped in devotion whenever I looked in. They had not yet begun rebuilding; perhaps they were still praying for funds, as they knelt among their burned and charred images. There were outlying temples on distant points of vantage, each inhabited by a solitary priest. One had long attracted us by its exquisite neatness and the propriety and cleanliness of its arrangements. Its occupant was away on pilgrimage, but he returned before we left the mountain, and we were not surprised to find him a young man of great gravity and courtesy. We had already studied his kitchen, with its kettle hanging from the rafters by a chain and a pointed stick, and had also observed his closed bed, which, in accordance with the stricter rule, was but a wooden seat, so that day or night he could never lie down. We now saw how carefully washed the feet in his straw sandals were, also

what superior straw sandals he had brought up to sell to pilgrims who had worn out theirs, and how particular he was to make no profit upon the transaction when we bought a pair, and inadvertently slightly overpaid for them. But our acquaintance was not long nor intimate enough to arrive at anything of the spiritual life beneath that exterior propriety. He it was who told us there was a way down the back of the mountain into the wilderness, where the wild cattle roam, and that, though bad, he could not say it was any other than passable, seeing he had just passed along it; and this he said though he could see our coolies' imploring gestures and hear their rather audibly muttered curses. They had everyone of them sworn there was no path; but there was, and the young hermit could not say otherwise. We often thought of him as we all fell headlong, more than once, while descending that path, that certainly did exist and enabled us to proceed to our next sacred mountain without descending into the burning cholera-stricken country.

Where we went it was hot enough; but it was positively cold on the flat top of Sai King, upwards of ten thousand feet high, where the temple gave us its best room; it was perfectly dark with no window, but a free current of air ran through the chinks between the planks of which it was built, and there were three separate places of danger between its door and the outside world. I had a bad fall there once, but I dreaded three every time I went in or out. There the winds howled, and the rain poured, and we were not sorry to do our cooking in our bedroom, although, in spite of all the cracks, the wood-smoke nearly blinded us. But the views were magnificent,—when we could see them. The final ascent,

after flights of steps, was up three ladders, one of twenty-seven rungs, whence we looked away, from the edge of the precipices that girdled the mountains all round, over everything as far as the eye could reach. The mountain-top was flat with ice-cold streams, and clad with rhododendrons, some twenty feet high, and firs festooned with moss, which also grew about a foot thick upon the ground almost everywhere. There were only three priests at the temple. One was old and useless; one was shivering with ague, which seemed strangely out of place on that mountain, but we did not learn how long he had been there, confining our sympathies to relieving him with quinine. The whole work and administration seemed to be carried on by the young priest who had led us up the mountain, and who by various begging-excursions had amassed enough money to buy it for four hundred gold dollars, and so to save it from the havoc of the woodcutters who had for years past been cutting down all the trees. This young priest took care of the potatoes, collected the mushrooms, and did everything, it seemed, that was done. But we could not find out that religious services were among the number; it was the aged priest who lit joss-sticks before the images in the morning.

Since then, however, we have stayed in a monastery with which his and the golden temple on Omi are both associated. The Monastery of the Parti-coloured Cliff is only about fifteen miles from Chungking, the commercial capital of China's great westernmost province of Szechuan. The entrance was striking, from the perspective of the carefully planted shrubs, the flights of steps, the carvings and careful adjusting of the path with sudden corners, lest its straightness should admit free access to evil

spirits. This is a prevalent Chinese superstition, leading to the almost universal practice of placing screens across their entrances either within or without, and like Fung Shui, the Lore of Wind and Water (often called the reigning religion of China), probably taking its origin in climatic influences, so much to be dreaded where transitions are so sudden and so severe. In America, where they are perhaps equally so on the East coast, it seems to be the custom to despise them and affect to be so hardy as to set them at nought, but the American race does not multiply. The Chinese race is most prolific, and in a climate like theirs it is obvious that the draughts, which are cut off by these screens and crooked entrances, would naturally be specially dangerous. The Chinese despise none of the forces of nature, and in winter they are as in a feather-bed inside their multiplicity of wadded garments, whereas in summer the men, at least, are bare to the waist, even at their feasts.

Much etiquette was observed in the method of our admission into Hoa Ngai. We brought gifts, as we were told was the usage, and polite monks received us and bade us wait first in one reception-room, then in another, while higher and still higher dignitaries were brought to parley with us. Finally we were conducted along a long, out-lying wing, the strangers' quarter, and led through one or two bedrooms, all full of beds, each carefully curtained and supplied with rolls of most comfortable-looking wadded quilts, evidently quite new from the brightness of their scarlet colour, a gift from some recent wealthy guest, we were informed. The floors were clean, everything was in order, and attendants, at once swift and quiet, were making all those last final arrangements that must be deferred

till the arrival of guests. But best of all was the view, the peaceful sunset framed in a setting of trees, the chastened lights and shadows and the fresh pure country air breathing in through the open window; but one must have lived shut up in a Chinese city to appreciate that as we did. The priests came to and fro to enquire if we were content. Only after some time did they signify that by their rules I must not share that room with the open window and the peaceful outlook, but retire to the women's quarter all along the long corridor again, down an outside staircase, along the corridor below, then through a great door with many bolts into a bedroom leading on into another, both full of beds, but otherwise untenanted and as clean as the rooms above, only without a view and with the dank smell of the earth outside instead of the fresh country air. Presently we were asked to take tea with the priests, tea and many sweets. A few priests are told off each day to prepare special food for the guests, generally of course pious pilgrims come to pray. There were over fifty priests in all, and we saw the orders for the day hung up on the wall as if for a regiment. We also saw all the others sitting at their severely simple meal, never occupying opposite sides of the same table, but always the same side of several tables, and in the midst on a raised seat the Chief Priest, not eating with the others. He always ate apart, but he sat there while they ate. In the early dawning we had been each day wakened by the bell to prayers and the solemn chanting. One day I sprang out of bed and followed the sound, which seemed to come from a side temple further down the corridor beyond my room. Only a few priests were as yet there, but they continued to come in till the chapel

was full. Only a very few of the youngest seemed to pay any heed to my unaccustomed presence, except the Chief Priest when he came in. He was an old man of over seventy, and had sat and talked with us at our evening-meal more than once, a great mark of condescension, we were told, only shown to honoured guests. Presently he came forward with a kindly smile, and taking me by the two shoulders very kindly but firmly pressed me into the place he desired me to occupy. The next minute I saw the reason of this. For, still chanting, the monks began to move in procession round and round the chapel in and out among the seats, forming the most curious figures, and ever quicker and quicker, ever with bowed heads and fingers and palms pressed close together. The wild simple chant rose and waned as they moved, close on fifty Chinese Buddhist priests moving as fast as ordinary people when they dance the Caledonians, all chanting and not one looking up. At last I felt as if I could bear no more. It may have been the early hour, the strange chant, the quick moving to and fro; at all events I tried to go to A.'s room and fell insensible on the stone passage just as I reached the top of his staircase. I recovered consciousness in an agony as to what Buddhist priests might think suitable treatment for a fainting lady if they any of them found me there, and that gave me strength to drag myself along to A.'s room. They were chanting still, the sweet wild music softened by distance now, or I might have thought it was all a dream as I looked out upon the gentle hills and sky framed in a setting of trees, and breathed the fresh country air again.

They were very strict in that monastery: they would not hear of our cooking anything for ourselves in

our own room beyond a kettle of tea; but their vegetarian diet satisfied all our wants. And there was a sort of chanting all day in the principal temple, a droning kind of chanting from certain priests told off for the purpose. We often looked in, for, uncommon enough, the central image was beautiful with a certain grave serenity. It was very ancient, they told us, and we believed them, for the images of to-day are made for money and lack the air of sanctity. This image recalled Byzantine pictures in Russian churches, very set, very firm, yet withal so kind and above all so holy.

But the most ancient temple was under the overhanging cliff from which the whole place is named. The water drips over it from the cliff, making the steps up to it so slippery that one must needs walk warily. There the images were of the true Indian type with supple, graceful figures, erect carriage, sloping shoulders and small waists, all as unlike the Chinese figure as possible. But perhaps the figure of Puh Hsien differed from the Chinese type as much as anything by the seraphic smile that seemed to illumine even the dark cavern in which it was shrined. Afterwards we saw carved on a headland of the Ya River, Indian divinities with low necked dresses and bare arms (an abomination in China), evidently from their type of great antiquity. Close by was the place where the head-priests are cremated, which seemed to have been recently rebuilt. We saw also the Chief Priest's grave, solemn by reason of its surrounding trees rather than from its architectural adornments. But the most striking feature of the whole place was its exquisite cleanliness and propriety, and the perfect order in all the land around that belonged to the monastery and

that might have been a model farm, so carefully was it weeded and watered and tended. The Chief Priest, so far as we could ascertain, was elected for three years only, and our Chief Priest's time was nearly drawing to an end, but before it did so he would hold the yearly ordination when the *stigmata* are burned on to the priests' heads by means of a lighted joss-stick as they lie prostrate before him. Those whose hearts are perfectly pure are said to feel no pain; but the most part appear to show some touch of human frailty. We were told that as a rule there would be two hundred candidates, but this year there were only half that number.

The monastery was charmingly situated, partly on a little knoll, partly on the more sloping side of the hill; with its outbuildings it must have covered about six or seven acres of ground, and the sound of worship was never silent there. But we were most impressed when we considered how great must have been the force religion brought to bear before out of such a slatternly race as the Chinese it produced this spotless, orderly, exemplary establishment. And as we sat within those peaceful precincts, listening to the rich deep sound of the Buddhist bells, so far more musical than those of Europe, and the hum of the chanting softened by distance, and realised that this ancient worship dated from immemorial ages (having been only reformed by Gautama) it seemed impossible to believe that for all these

centuries God has left these people groping in the darkness for a way to approach Him, or that this long-continued worship can be altogether unpleasing to the Most High.

The old Faiths grown more wide,
Purer and glorified,
Are still our life-long guide.

But in China they have to grow more wide. Would He be our God, all-powerful, all-merciful, all-loving, if for all these centuries He had left this patient people with their high ethics, their complex and beautiful system of morality, without any elements of truth to guide them? Surely Sergia Fu (as they call Gautama) and Confucius must alike be placed among the noblest seekers after truth, and the venerable Master Lao-Tsze perhaps even higher still. But to treat of him, so little known in Europe, whose teachings are now so clouded over with superstitious practices and his followers generally fallen so far away, would require at least an article to itself. Only thinking of these holy men of old we too bowed our heads and prayed that in teaching what further inkling of truth, what gladder tidings the All-Father has vouchsafed to us, missionaries might cease to divert the Chinese from that reverence for their pious ancestors and their high moral doctrine, which has been so far the great safeguard of the Chinese race, making their days longer in the land than those of any other race of whom we know.

ALICIA BEWICKE LITTLE.

A LETTER FROM THE COUNTRY.

DEAR LAD,

Yesterday (Sunday) evening I was leaning against the churchyard wall and looking over it, as I often do, across the valley. Everything was so quiet and still. In the far distance I could just see the black cloud that almost always, even on Sundays, hovers over Hampton. What ages ago it seems that you gave up farming and went there to work in the mills! Something came over me, and I thought I'd write to you, dear Lad, though very likely you have quite forgotten me and the old days.

It's dull here now, I can tell you; do you ever think how dull it must be! There never seems a soul about the place, and never a step comes up the garden walk, at least a step I care for. If the gate clicks in the dusk it is only old Robin or Peter (they are still just alive), coming to sit a bit with father and chat about old times. I am not quite so young but I catch myself too sometimes thinking of old times. Not that father's up to much talking or much working either, and for that matter every man about the place seems worn out too. Certainly the old fellows have lasted longer than one could have expected, and it's a wonder how they still manage to get through the work as well as they do. But it looks as if we should wake one morning (I mean we few girls who are left here) and find them all gone. There are no young men to take their places, and as for a ploughboy it's years since such a thing has been seen here.

The boys are learning Shakespeare and Latin, and a number of things

that seem to me still more absurd (for them at any rate), and what they'll do when they grow up I can't think. They won't like to do as you did, and go to work in a mill. I suppose they'll go into milliners' shops and measure ribbons and things, or the more manly ones may sell cheese and bacon behind counters; and I only trust they'll enjoy it. It's hard, or so it seems to me, on the old men, just when they wanted a little rest, to have to go back to a sort of second childhood, and be ploughboys and crowboys again. How the farmers get along (most of whom are nearly as worn out as father, and not half so good-tempered over it,) would be hard to imagine, only I suppose they don't get along at all. And now the talk is that you (I don't mean only you, dear Lad,) are never coming back to the land. If that's the case I suppose we shall have to go into the towns too, for soon there will be no one left in the village to look after us.

When I complain of dullness you must not think I am complaining for myself so much as the village. Do you know, I've been school-teaching now for some time, and it finds me plenty to do in the daytime. A great deal I have to teach the boys (who ought to have been, but never will be, ploughboys) is, as I said, very inappropriate; but from teaching them I've learnt a great many things I should never have known in any other way. Some of the poetry and fine writing my pupils get no good, or very little, from has sunk into my heart, and made me, I hope, a wiser and better girl than I used to be. Among

other things I've learnt not to grumble (for this letter, dear Lad, is not a grumble); and of the sort of content which teaches to give up fretting for what you are not likely to get, I hope I have garnered a fair share.

Dear Lad, don't you ever look up from the smoky town at the old village you used, once upon a time, to be so fond of, and where you knew every stone and every tree, or at the church where your old mother lies buried, (but perhaps you don't care for churches any more), and wish yourself back again? If not, you must have altered a great deal. A poor place, yes, as no one knows better than I do; a poor place indeed, and poorer than ever now, but with something better than riches, or rather with a wealth of its own that you might go far and never find elsewhere. It seems to me there are other things besides national glory that are worth paying for, even as much as three or four shillings a week. Was it worth nothing to see the lark rise in the morning from the shining grass at your feet, or to watch the little rows of green corn (of which after all no one perhaps would ever make a profit) peeping up after the rain, and later perhaps to see the wheat-field burst all at once into ear after a shower? How you must have changed to be able to do without them! You used to notice, when you were a lad, every living thing about the farm. There was not a nest but you knew the builder; you would never have thought of robbing one,—not that I would have let you (in the days when you did as I told you) if you had wished to. There was not a bird's note but you knew it; the thrushes are bursting their throats here now, and the nightingales in the dingle are singing as loudly as if there was an audience to listen

to them. I dare say you could not tell one note now from another; the noise of those hammers must dull the ear for such delicate sounds. The cherries and apples are setting,—but there, there's no end to all the glorious sights and sounds (like so many picture-galleries and concerts all free, gratis, and for nothing,) and you are out of it all. Do you remember the walks that we used to take in spring and summer about the lanes, and what we used to talk about? You get your walks still, no doubt, with somebody else. I have no one to walk with. Dear Lad, if you'd rather forget one thing you said, (not once but many times), Jenny will try and forget it too. Please don't imagine I'm jealous. I know nothing as to the sort of girls there may be at Hampton; there are plenty of nice ones, no doubt, and finer a great deal than we were. Certainly we never thought we were fine. Perhaps we were a little too much like the daisies; fresh and clean, and pretty enough in an innocent and simple way. You will have got past the daisies by now, and I am not so silly as to think the daisies everything.

They tell me that skilled workmen at Hampton (and I am sure you are skilled) get high wages, such as no one ever dreamed of in the country, but that houses, and lodgings, and everything you eat, drink, or wear is so dear that at the end of the week you are not much better off than our old gaffers at twelve shillings a week. I don't quite believe that, but I dare say you want a number of things in a town you never thought of wanting at home,—creating wants (don't they call it?) and then supplying them. I suppose it takes wiser folks than me to know about such things, but surely if everyone is to run off to towns to manufacture things, while the country grows gradually more and

more a desert, there will one day be nobody left to buy anything. But that is not so much what I was meaning. I dare say you are doing better in a money-sense than you would have done here. I only want to ask if you are quite certain that that's everything, and if so where you gained the knowledge. Was everything here so wretched that it was quite clearly an act of wisdom to shake the dust off your feet so determinedly? Think of your sweet little cottage and garden. The cottage has been vacant now for some time, and is going to ruin, while the garden is like the sluggard's (I wonder if you remember about him), and overgrown with all kinds of weeds and rubbish. I only hope you don't (as I hear is the case with many who are getting high wages) live in a dark dirty court, shut off even from the street, and buy your vegetables quite faded from an Irish costermonger who has probably never seen any fresh ones. Are people as healthy with you as with us? You may be, very likely; but what have you to thank for that but your upbringing in country air? And you show your gratitude by leaving it.

The Old Bell too, with the roses climbing over its porch, where no one took any harm, and where even the

Parson thought it no shame to be seen (wasn't old Foster the sexton?) you have changed perhaps for one of those glaring town palaces, as they call them. You are a fine workman (oh, I am sure of it!) but will you ever be prouder than you were on that day when you came out prize ploughman? I was a little bit proud too. How well I remember your face, and that I thought you a little conceited over your victory! I'd forgive you that willingly enough if you'd come back again. You might quite easily take all the prizes now, for, as I said, there are none but grey-beards left to do anything; but then there have been no prizes for a long, long time.

Well, this has been a long letter for me to write, and I'm afraid you'll find it still longer to read. Good-bye, dear Lad; I wish you all the good things your town has to offer. May you prosper and grow rich, as I suppose you want to; and if riches ever make up for the loss of many things (and you do seem to be giving up a good many) I hope they will do so with you. After all, whether you win your way in a village or a town won't make much difference in the end. I must try and win mine, alone, in my little corner.

JENNY.

VOICES OF THE NIGHT.

To study the intricate, and often seemingly unreasonable, ways of sound, you cannot do better than stroll out on a night not far advanced and sufficiently still, choose some retired easy resting-place on the broad common, and let Nature be your teacher.

The sounds of busy life are not yet hushed. Climbing the short hill behind us a tax-cart is making its way complainingly, the wheels grinding in the grit and pebbles of the roadway rotten from the long drought : the framework of the cart too is slack in its joints and bolts from the same cause, and clatters and creaks as it jolts over the loose stones ; but it reaches the straight flat at last, and the slow grinding changes for a brisk rhythmical rattle as the old mare's footfall rings out crisply in the fresh still air. Suddenly the sound both of horse and cart come resonant and full. They are crossing the spot where the road rumbles hollow, and about which the country-folk will talk mysteriously. There are barrows, not a few, about the country, and battle-grounds of many dates lie around. The people wish you to believe, even as they undoubtedly believe themselves, that slaughtered warriors of old lie below (perhaps along with hidden treasure), or else perhaps some malefactor, if they were to dig, would be found there with a stake through his body. What they would find, if they were to dig, would probably be one of the many faults, or traps, that abound hereabout, where some long vanished rill has eaten away a tunnel with

its natural vaulted roof that may last through all the ages.

The distinctive rattle of a cart is a curious and notable fact. It is equally unmistakable on all roads and in all weathers, being sometimes recognised over great distances ; and often long before the human ear can catch the sound the watch-dog has raised his head from the ground and uttered a short glad warning as he detected the return of his master then perhaps still considerably more than a mile distant. It is a question whether the dog's position with his head near the ground does not give him a decided advantage in hearing such a noise as that of wheels. The ground clearly can carry certain sounds across great intervals ; hence the remarkable sound-range of cannon, which is far greater than that of thunder.

It is incorrect, however, to speak of the distinctive sound of wheels. The distinctive note more really resides in the hollow body of the vehicle, and thus the rattle of a tax-cart gives place to a *roll* when the cart is one of larger type, while again a close carriage distinctly *rumbles*, and the big van is aptly described as *lumbering* along. In all such cases the woodwork is the main resonator. The same mistake is made when people talk of the telegraph-wires humming in the wind. Doubtless the tense wires are the real cause of vibration, but the true sound is in the wooden posts.

Before we dismiss the rattle of the cart another very noticeable fact claims a moment's reflection. The

continuous sound was far more apparent when the cart was half a mile distant down the hill, than now, when it is dying out though at no greater actual distance on the high ground. Is the cause due to mere relative position? It has been a disputed point whether sounds more readily ascend than descend. I was present once at an experiment made during the midnight hours in the exceptional quiet of a village church-yard, when it was found that there was no appreciable difference in the ticking of a watch heard from the parapet of the tower when the watch was held five feet above the ground, and from the ground when the watch was held five feet above the parapet. Yet a bomb bursting from a rocket one hundred and fifty feet above one's head makes not nearly so loud a report as it makes when fired on the ground to an observer at twice that distance. The whole explanation in this case being that sound in the free air overhead has nothing that can reflect or reinforce its intensity, while in the other case the ground itself acts as a powerful sounding-board.

We are waiting now for the striking of the hour as it is wont to come across the valley from two church-towers distant two and four miles respectively. There is much to be learnt about the character of the night, if not of the coming weather, from the voice of bells with which you are familiar. But while we wait there comes another signal; a low and indistinct drone falls on the ear, rapidly growing fuller till it breaks with perfect suddenness into a harsh roar. The late up-express has started from the distant town and, working its way through the deep cutting, has emerged abruptly into the open and now, keeping alongside the river with its many locks,

a considerable gradient is in its favour, and for a couple of minutes the speed will be over fifty miles an hour. It is a tearing, angry, remorseless sound, softening down for a moment and then breaking out again as the train threads its way in and out of clumps of trees. All the while the rapid stroke of the pistons, with steam at one hundred and sixty pounds behind them, is clearly distinguishable amid the uproar. Then for three seconds' space all is merged in one wild roar ten-fold louder than before; the carriages are running over the pile-bridge, and the wooden framework acts as the fiddle-body to the fiddle-strings. A quarter of a mile further on, passing the tall semaphore, according to invariable rule the driver blows his whistle. That roar and that whistle are haunting sounds. I have heard them both, —one, an indescribable raucous jangle, the other, a piercing shrillness — heard them from the car of a balloon coming up through many thousand feet into the still rare air above the clouds where all other sounds have been long left behind.

With the exception of the quick short bark (without the least roll) that comes up to the higher regions from a big gun fired below, no sounds are more penetrating into upper regions than the two just described, so totally different in character. In the one case, fifty yards of double rails together with the heavy train above are all quivering sound-waves into space; in the other, the iron giant blows his one shrill pipe with the breath of that fearful pressure to the square inch. The train tells of no wet weather yet, for its sound lingers on long and loud as it hurries on eastward. When that same long rumble comes further yet and softer away in the south-west, then the neighbours say that rain is in the wind.

There they go at last,—the old Cambridge chimes, older than the days of Crotch, ringing out the familiar intervals from the nearer tower straight across the valley. Now listen while the tenor speaks, ten times all told. The first four strokes come full and clear; the sound during the four next, however, seems to have gone in, growing faint and fainter till with the final two strokes it swells out strong as ever. This modulation in the sound of bells lends a special charm to their music, and often being noticeable on perfectly still nights has been the subject of much speculation and theory. Some have supposed that masses of different air drift along, obstructing as they pass the travel of sound. Unquestionably it is the quality of the air, quite as much as gusts of wind, that account for that characteristic rise and fall, particularly noticeable when many bells are in full peal together.

The phenomenon is on all fours with an effect often to be observed when viewing a distant object through a powerful telescope. Look with such an instrument at a faint, far object, say the signal-mast of a light-ship far out at sea. There is very commonly an unsteadiness of the atmosphere, like the quivering of hot air over a stove, that causes the distant object to come in and out in a manner and at intervals in close accord with the fitful hearing of the bells.

Now that the nearer clock is silent the far town-clock can be heard still speaking. The big bell there is heavier, and the hammer that operates upon it is heavier also and slower in its stroke.

The weights of bells in village churches is generally much over-estimated. The sexton likes to boast of his big bell, and takes care not to make the number of hundred-

weights too few. Roughly speaking a bell of four feet diameter will weigh a good ton, and for bells slightly larger, or smaller, you may make an allowance of about one hundredweight to the inch.

The sound of church-bells is much more mellow and musical when they are in full swing. Each bell is then struck a full fair blow, and the great mouth upturned to the air speaks out first in one direction and then in another. There is something responsive in these alternate strokes, and pleasing to the ear; but the perfection of such antiphonal music is in a muffled peal properly rung, truly the most solemn and impressive requiem that art can render.

There are footfalls now, the last that will break the silence of the night in this retired hamlet. It has gone ten, and the company at the village ale-house has broken up. Someone of lusty lungs is shouting a parting word at the top of his voice to his fellow already half across the common. But the voice of a grown man, unless he be a street-crier, is not well tuned to carry far; it will not carry to such a distance as it once did; this has been proved again and again in my own experience. In descending with a balloon from high elevations different sounds of animal life come within hearing in due order. The barking of some dog will generally come first, and this is so commonly heard that I have always thought that they were barking at the balloon. Ducks perhaps may be heard next, and then human voices. As a matter of course everyone is shouting up at you with all their lungs; but though the harvesters strain at you with their best view-holloa they are not heard nearly so far as children. The shrill trebles, in chorus certainly, win easily.

As an inevitable consequence of

the late footsteps the dogs are challenging far and near, and answering one another from every farmstead round. A neighbourhood will sometimes get an evil name from the barking of the dogs at night. Some ill-trained cur may at the first have been the chief offender, and then other dogs, if not duly checked, will be sure to fall into the same bad habit. But of all miserable noises that make night hideous commend me to a dog that bays at the full moon. This is not a mere trick of his, or a bad habit; surely something deep in the dog's nature makes him for the time being, not restless or unhappy but, melancholy mad; some dim sense of mystery and awe, perhaps akin to the way he is affected by music. The dog is not really made miserable by a fiddle or a horn, or he would slink away; as it is, he prefers to stay and howl.

The wind has risen considerably during the half-hour that we have been keeping watch, and now murmurs plaintively through the neighbouring clump of pines. The murmur rises in pitch to a whistle, almost to a scream, during short-lived gusts, and then dies out in soft cadence. Some have thought that the openings between the pine-leaves act like chinks in a window-frame, and that the wind is blowing, as it were, through crevices; but the sound is simply that of friction. It is as though caused by a multitude of minute impacts, like sand washing down the beach with the recoil of a wave, and can be imitated by plucking a twig and blowing against it. The sound grows softer when the air is moister, and the characteristic *sough* is equally well known and named. The music of wind through trees changes also with the season, becoming more plaintive in

autumn as the leaves grow crisper and less yielding.

Whence come these transient disturbances in the air that arise and die all within an hour? Are they not sometimes of very local origin, perhaps an eddy that has had birth where cross currents overhead have met? In summer weather, when thunder is about and clouds come up against the wind, strong and short-lived eddies are frequent, sometimes becoming seriously aggressive in their nature, as on a hot day last August when a sudden dust-storm swept across Kennington Oval, actually hiding the players from sight and for some minutes putting a stop to the game.

The night is too dark to allow of our seeing who is digging furtively in the earth not a hundred yards away. Is it a miser burying his gold, or a murderer hiding his victim? There it goes again, the sound apparently of a spade struck into stony ground. It is the ducks on the neighbouring pond, as you may tell by the subdued babble of the younger birds; they are well out on the water, knowing that Reynard used to look round that way when they were younger and had not yet learned wisdom.

But for some time there has been a sound now and again falling on the ear that defies interpretation, something between a creak and a croak, and whether on the ground or above it would be hard to tell, for the sound being vague and faint the ear has grown fatigued and easily deceived, and, as a consequence, imagination begins to play its part. Neither distance nor direction seems fixed, and yet doubtless both are invariable. Very possibly it may be a broken limb of a tree grating occasionally against the branches. Yet it might pass for ventriloquism. Night-birds that utter a monotonous cry are said,

but without sufficient reason, to have the faculty of ventriloquising. The fact is that they utter the same cry now here and now there in darkness, when it is always difficult to locate sound with any accuracy, and the incessant repetition of the same note soon wearies the ear and confuses it.

There is a more definite noise now near at hand and coming nearer; a stealthy footstep, almost ghostlike, and a dim white outline looms in the direction whence it comes. Here we have all the material needed for the uncanny tradition that hung about this spot till Board Schools arose. Yonder pond is named after the White Lady,—where she drowned herself, I suppose—and this is where she used to walk. She, however, who blows that one loud breath, not a dozen yards off, must be a cow, for well we know the ways of her kind. Our presence has been discovered, and no creatures have more down-right curiosity in their natures, which is certainly saying a good deal. It is a point of honour with them, however, not to betray it. If a game of village cricket is played in a paddock where cows are, they preserve outwardly a stolid indifference throughout the game; but directly the players retire to luncheon they will at once

walk on to the pitch and carefully scrutinise the stumps.

Other familiar sounds are to be heard. An occasional hoot, many times repeated, has told that the owl calling to his mate has started on a marauding expedition; but there are others on the prowl as well as they. A single shot has just rung out in the thick covert behind the brow of the hill. It will not be repeated again to-night, at least in that quarter, for the poachers hereabout know their business and long before the keeper (who is doubtless known to be elsewhere) can reach the spot, the dead game will be picked up and the gun-barrel and its stock separately stowed inside the lining of the loose long coat.

Such night-sounds as have reached us during the past hour might have been heard on this same hill-side any night throughout a life-time; but from the London road below has just spoken a voice that was unheard and undreamed of in these parts a year ago,—the warning horn of a passing motor-car. Yet there is no sound of other wheels; the warning was probably given in recognition of the constable on his beat. The constable will also have heard that gunshot, and doubtless will have made his own scientific notes thereon.

JOHN M. BACON.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

THE first review of his work that Trollope ever saw was in *THE TIMES*, and it compared *THE KELLYS AND THE O'KELLYS* to a leg of mutton, "substantial but a little coarse." Twelve years later, in 1860, Hawthorne in a passage of warm eulogy came to practically the same opinion. Trollope's novels, he said, precisely suited his taste; they had for him the charm of something perfectly unlike his own visionary world; they were written "on the strength of beef and through the inspiration of ale; they were as English as a beefsteak." The very word which *THE TIMES'* reviewer used with an accent of contempt Hawthorne used in commendation; the books pleased him just because they were so solid and substantial. That is the impression which anyone derives from reading Trollope, but the fact is that for the moment no one reads him. All writers undergo this period of eclipse after their death; a few recover from it. Is Trollope one of these? Would we recommend him to the younger generation which scarcely knows the name of Mrs. Proudie? Would we advise a publisher to re-issue those of his best novels,—*CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?* for instance, *PHINEAS FINN*, and *THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET*,—which are out of print?

On the whole I am inclined to answer in the affirmative. In the group of novelists to whom Trollope belongs both by date and natural affinities, that is, among the lesser contemporaries of Thackeray, he stands, I think, next to Charles Reade. He has not the lyrical fire

and intellectual fervour of Kingsley,—indeed no mortal could have less poetry in his composition; he has not the skill of Wilkie Collins in construction,—the charm of a well-conducted plot was a thing which he felt but could not attain to; he has not the grace and delicate irony which distinguished Mrs. Oliphant at her best. His work is everywhere heavy-handed; yet although others outstrip him in style, invention, and the quality of humour, he is not without these gifts. Nobody could swear to a page of his writing as you can to one of Thackeray's, but his style is simple, forcible and lucid: his invention is sober and judicious; and though his humour is not remarkable, he has humour. And in one gift, the greatest of all for a novelist, he approaches the great masters,—in the power of characterisation. Scott and Thackeray can create personages who inspire more sympathy or keener revulsion; their people are more beautiful, more witty, more lovable, more tragic, and more humorous; but they are not more alive. Mr. Palliser, Archdeacon Grantley, Mr. Harding, Lady Glen-cora, Mrs. Proudie, Miss Dunstable, all these people are just as real to me in their way as Colonel Newcome and Becky Sharp. I do not know or care so much about them; they do not interest me as Thackeray's people do; they are neither my friends nor my enemies; but they produce an equally vivid illusion of life. Where the other novelists of his own rank have dwelt mainly on the incidents that they had to describe, Trollope has dwelt upon the actors. He was a

man who always meant precisely what he said, and he writes in his autobiography concerning his characters : " I have wandered alone among the rocks and woods crying at their griefs, laughing at their absurdities, and thoroughly enjoying their joy." And the ideal which he set before himself is one which his practice gives him excellent right to commend, as he does, to other artists.

The novelist has other aims than the elucidation of his plot. He desires to make his readers so intimately acquainted with his characters that the creatures of his brain should be speaking, moving, living human creatures. This he can never do unless he knows those fictitious personages himself, and he can never know them unless he can live with them in the full reality of established intimacy. They must be with him as he lies down to sleep, and as he wakes from his dreams. He must learn to hate them and to love them. He must argue with them, quarrel with them, forgive them, and even submit to them. He must know of them whether they be cold-blooded or passionate, whether true or false, and how far true, and how far false. The depth and the breadth, and the narrowness and the shallowness of each should be clear to him. And as, here in our outer world, we know that men and women change,—become better or worse as temptation or conscience may guide them—so should these creatures of his change, and every change should be noted by him. On the last day of each month recorded, every person in his novel should be a month older than on the first. If the would-be novelist has aptitudes that way, all this will come to him without much struggling ; but if it do not come, I think he can only make novels of wood.

It is so that I have lived with my characters, and thence has come whatever success I have obtained. There is a gallery of them, and of all in that gallery I may say that I know the tone of the voice, and the colour of the hair, every flame of the eye, and the very clothes they wear. Of each man I could assert whether he would have said these or the other words ; of every woman, whether she would then have smiled or so have frowned. When I shall feel that this

intimacy ceases, then I shall know that the old horse should be turned out to grass.

Such is the counsel given by one who was in this respect a strenuous and successful artist. Mrs. Oliphant, commenting on it, declared very honestly that she could say for herself nothing of the sort ; that her characters were no more to her than the characters in other books. That is why Trollope's work has a chance of survival denied to hers. This intimate familiarity with his own inventions enabled him to get a grip upon them so sure that he could make a drama pass in the mind almost without the aid of action. I hardly know a finer piece of psychological analysis than the few opening pages of *BARCHESTER TOWERS* which describe Archdeacon Grantley watching by the deathbed of his father the Bishop, while the news is daily expected of the downfall of a Ministry which would certainly appoint the Archdeacon to his father's chair. The son kneels by the old man's bedside and wrestles with himself that he may not desire his father's death ; he prays and he conquers in prayer. Death comes while he watches ; he goes out to meet the news that the Ministry has fallen, and it brings not bitterness but a genuine happiness that he has no cause of reproach against his thoughts. But when Bishop Proudie arrives on the scene the Archdeacon will not be found in any way submissive, for meekness is none of his attributes. He has not desired his father's death, but he is none the more willing that another than he should be appointed to succeed his father. Thus, before the action of the book properly opens you have set before you the very inmost heart of a chief actor in it ; the clergyman who enters the Church as a matter of course rather than by

vocation; a man in no sense spiritually-minded, ambitious of worldly success, but not basely ambitious, set upon his interests but loyal to his lights, zealous for himself and for the temporal Church, religious rather than devout, but essentially a Christian (as he understands the word), and a gentleman every fibre of him. Good as the Archdeacon is, he is not a whit better than his father-in-law, Mr. Harding, the Warden of the First Chronicle of Barsest. Only a true artist could understand and put life into types so absolutely opposed, (for Mr. Harding is meek and gentle as the Archdeacon is resolute and warlike) and present them so as to win sympathy for both, showing how each alike is faithful to his conception of honour, yet how unlike are the two conceptions. Unhappily in other ways nobody could be less of an artist than was Trollope. He was constitutionally indolent, or rather averse to desk-work, though possessing a superhuman supply of energy; and to correct this aversion he adopted a plan of labour which he recommends with the most ingenuous good-faith. When he undertook a novel, he decided that it should be of such and such a length; then he portioned out this task into months, weeks, and days and kept a daily register. Thus he tied himself to produce a stint which amounted to about ten thousand words (say twenty pages of this magazine) in the course of every week. Whether he was in the vein or not, the work was done; and he admits that there were moments when he was not in the vein. At other periods he became absorbed, and his daily stint was doubled and trebled: and it was in these times that his best work was done. In some ways the arrangement was excellent; but the result was that he came to consider quantity rather than quality. It was

a point of honour with him to fill three volumes with the fullest measure; but whether the work produced against the grain was or was not up to the necessary level he did not stop to consider. It never seems to have occurred to him to re-write or recast to any considerable extent (though perhaps the necessity for this operation to a practised workman is less than writers have declared it to be), still less to discard anything as superfluous to the conduct of his story. In this respect the standard of quantity was his ruin. If the main thread of his plot would not fill the allotted measure a new one had to be worked in, and his conscience never smote him for incorporating inferior work with good. In *DR. THORNE*, one of his best novels, there is some of the worst padding ever invented, relating to certain Thornes of Ullathorne who have no real connection with the story. Cut that away and there would remain a novel of perfectly sufficient length; but Trollope's notion of business integrity demanded the padding, and his artistic conscience did not revolt against it. In *THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET* many chapters are taken up with the love-affairs of that very unattractive person Johnny Eames; yet absolutely the only link which unites these to the fortunes of the Crawley family is the fact that Johnny Eames, being rejected by Lily Dale, volunteers to go abroad and seek for Dr. Arabin to unravel the mystery of the stolen cheque. It is Johnny who brings the news to Mrs. Arabin, and at that interview the mystery is unravelled; but a casual letter would have answered the purpose quite as well as the mission of a gentleman with an unprosperous love-affair on hand. Yet Trollope, though in his very outspoken self-criticism he blames the plot of this particular novel for a mechanical defect (the

improbability of all the puzzle about the stolen cheque), never shows the least consciousness of this far graver defect of irrelevancy. He himself is keenly interested in the fortunes and flirtations of Johnny Eames, and with that he is satisfied. The truth is that he was too easily satisfied. If he could make his people behave in a lifelike way, if he could feel assured that their motives were genuine, he did not trouble sufficiently to be certain that their behaviour was interesting or that their motives were worth discussion. A great deal of his work concerns itself with the dull actions of dull people, and since Trollope's vision is perfectly normal there is nothing attractive in the recital. When the thing which Trollope had to tell was interesting in itself he could tell it excellently; but he had not the wonderful art of Miss Austen which can construct a masterpiece out of trivialities. Irony was far too delicate an instrument for his rough handling, and his humour though genuine is no more distinctive than his style. Indeed the passages which are intended to be funny and nothing more (for instance the loves of Captain Bellfield and Mr. Cheeseacre in *CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?*) are the dullest things he wrote.

I think the reason why Trollope is so good to read, as I for one find him, is that he entered so thoroughly into the whole business of life. Whatever he did was done with a zest; and his characters have nothing half-hearted about them. They enjoy their loves and their friendships, and they get full value out of their quarrels just as their creator did. But circumstances conspired to make Trollope not only a teller of good stories (which his genial, expansive nature would have made him in any case) but also a remarkable artist in the business of characterisation. He was gregarious by all

his tastes and habits; fate compelled him to loneliness, even to a kind of ostracism, and he was reduced to make company for himself. The pages which record his early life are the best written and the most touching that I have read of his writing, and their story is worth recalling. His father was a man of some considerable means, by profession a barrister, but eccentric, unpractical, and morose. He put his money into land injudiciously, then, still more injudiciously, tried to work the land; and the result was ruin by slow degrees. While the father's ruin was in progress Trollope was a schoolboy. He went as a day-boy to Harrow when he was seven, and he was an untidy, awkward, loutish little boy. His head-master stopped him in the street to ask, "Whether it was possible that Harrow School was disgraced by so disreputably dirty a little boy." "He must have known me," Trollope comments, "had he seen me as he was wont to see me, for he was in the habit of flogging me constantly. Perhaps he did not recognise me by my face!" At Winchester where he went when he was twelve, he was flogged still more persistently, and yet worse things came on him. His father migrated to America and the school-fees remained unpaid; the fact was publicly proclaimed by a stoppage of Trollope's weekly pocket-money and he began to drink the bitter cup of poverty. Men, and Englishmen in particular, are never tolerant to those of their fellows who fall into shabbiness; but boys, and especially English boys, are still less so. "It is in the nature of boys to be cruel," says Trollope, and most of us can remember the genteel contempt which was heaped upon any unfortunate lad who was obliged to go about with patched clothes or clouted boots. At fifteen the boy was taken from Winchester and

sent back again to Harrow, his father having returned; but the change was to a worse misery. The Trollopes' farm-house was three miles off, and twice daily this distance had to be tramped in all weathers backwards and forwards. The condition of a sizar at a university, where at least a man can live in some measure to himself, was never enviable; and Trollope was, in his own words, a sizar at a fashionable school. "My tutor," he writes, "took me without the fee; but when I heard him declare the fact in the pupil-room before the boys, I hardly felt grateful for the charity." The iron entered into his soul and he grew more and more lumpish and loutish, all the more dejected because of his keen desire for companionship and ambition to excel in the sports which were denied to him. His home was scarcely more cheerful than the school. Only one ray of comfort dawned for him in that time, and it left an exultation which lasted as long as life. "At last," he says, "I was driven to rebellion, and there came a great fight,—at the end of which my opponent had to be taken home for a while. If these words be ever printed, I trust that some schoolfellow of those days may still be left alive who will be able to say that, in claiming this solitary glory of my school-days, I am not making a false boast."

That was the one distinction of his career. He learnt nothing, and left Harrow at nineteen ignorant even of the simplest rules of arithmetic, ignorant of everything but an imperceptible quantity of Latin and Greek; with nothing, in short, to show for all that misery. "From the first to the last," are his words, "there was nothing satisfactory about my school-career,—except the way in which I licked the boy who had to be taken home to be cured."

By that time his mother was the

main support of the household. After the family's removal to America, in pursuit of a new speculation which succeeded no better than the rest, she tried authorship in despair and produced her much-talked of work on the Domestic Manners of the Americans. She was then fifty, and for the rest of her life she turned out books almost as fast as her son was destined to do. Trollope was seventeen when she began this new career (in 1832), and the possibility of authorship as a means of livelihood was thus brought constantly before his mind. A hereditary bent towards literary expression no doubt there was in him, and the enforced isolation of his boyhood had given it a direction. He had begun, like most solitary youths, to keep a journal; and what is less common, he had made for himself a pastime of castle-building. "For weeks, for months if I remember rightly, from year to year I would carry on the same tale binding myself down to certain laws, to certain proportions, and proprieties, and unities. Nothing impossible was ever introduced, nor ever anything which from outward circumstances would seem to be violently improbable. I myself was of course my own hero."

But for this combination of circumstances it seems to me almost certain that Trollope would never have been a writer. If chance had allowed him to take an ordinary part in school-life he would have thrown himself into games at all events as he did afterwards into work: if it had not been for the example of his mother, his castle-building might never have crystallised itself into a definite form of art; and if his education had been such as to give him a start in a profession which he could have adopted with zeal, he would scarcely have faced the laborious apprenticeship to success-

ful fiction. As it was, though on entering the Post-Office (where a relation of his mother's had procured him a clerkship worth £90 a year) he decided that the one way in which he could hope to make a success in life and earn something beyond a pittance was by the writing of novels, he was long before he made his first attempt. For seven years he lived as a clerk in London, always in trouble with his superiors by reason of his unpunctuality (which he seems to think was fairly compensated by his energy when he set to work), and of his temper which was always insubordinate. All this time he was deep in debt, forming that intimate acquaintance with the habits of bill-discounters which is written large on half a score of his books; and, moreover, plunging, so far as his means and credit permitted, into all the things that a young man ought not to do. If one studies the character of Johnny Eames one will, I think, know a good deal about the character of Anthony Trollope. One will probably also conclude that a novelist does not write best about the things he knows best. A novel of clerical life written by a clergyman is apt to be what is vulgarly called shoppy, to dwell upon details which may interest other clergymen but not the average man; and Trollope's novels about the Civil Service are shoppy, whereas his novels about clerical life, which he only divined from outside,—letting his fancy play about a situation and seizing the points of real human interest—are the best things he did. His political stories are less good, probably because Trollope aspired to be a politician and to make speeches in the House of Commons, whereas to preach sermons or visit the sick came no way within his aspirations. In a word, we want a story of men and

women in interesting relations to each other; we do not want a novelist's theory of the British Constitution. Trollope had a theory of the British Constitution, and the speeches which he could not make in the House got themselves written down in his books; but the clerical novels carry no suggestion of a sermon. What interested him in life was not passion but principle,—the point of honour, and the pride which is so closely connected with the point of honour. He depicts again and again the struggle which takes place when a man or woman is called upon to sacrifice love, interest, or ambition to duty or to the demands of self-respect; the struggle between loyalty to a cause and loyalty to an idea; sometimes too the struggle between duty and pride. What interests him about Lucy Robarts is not that she is in love, but that, being very honestly in love, she refuses to accept the man who loves her unless his mother, Lady Lufton, not merely sanctions the match but comes and begs Lucy to be her daughter-in-law. What interests him about Phineas Finn is not that he is a handsome and agreeable young man whom women naturally take to, but that he is so placed as to make it very hard for him to distinguish between his duty to his party and to the abstract principles, as he conceives them, of right and wrong. What interests him about Mr. Crawley is precisely the disease of pride, which assumes the garb of humility and displays its bitterness by self-abasement, yet is continually forced to give way and accept for the necessities of his wife and children some help out of the affluence of those who eagerly desire to help. And Trollope's merit is specially due to the fact that in selecting a group of characters and circum-

stances to display such a struggle his invention is fed by a very wide acquaintance with life.

The turn in his career came when he was released from routine-work in London and sent as surveyor's clerk to Ireland to extend the blessings of a postal system to Connaught. The office was one which no man coveted, but it brought to Trollope an increase of income, and a very active out-door life in which he was largely his own master. With three or four hundreds a year in Ireland he was as well off as most of his neighbours, well enough off to keep a horse and hunt; and so began, for him, the greatest joy of his life next to successful work. He was heavy, short-sighted, and rode abominably, but he hunted with an indomitable energy. For the next twenty years he lived a life of continual movement, first in Ireland then in England, as a sort of travelling inspector of country post-offices, extending the ramifications of the postal system. It appears that he did excellent work, though he did it in a way that brought him into constant conflict with his superiors; but that was the salt of existence to him, and among his regrets when he left the Civil Service he records not merely the life-long interest in his labours, but the feuds, "such delicious feuds." Whether he was a good official or no does not particularly matter, though for my own part I believe he was; but this way of living, in continual movement hither and thither over the face of the country, brought him into relations with all sorts and conditions of men and women. Genial, sociable, and quarrelsome, wherever he went he took an interest in the people whom he met, exchanged stories with them, took sides and fought battles, learnt their difficulties and successes, and delighted in their affections, but more particularly in their feuds. He is

always chanting of arms and the man; but the weapons are the weapons of modern warfare, — letters to *THE TIMES* and newspaper articles, or hunting-crops and fisticuffs. It would be impossible to name another novelist of domestic life in whose pages there is so much assault and battery. Johnny Eames blacks Mr. Adolphus Crosbie's eyes; Frank Gresham chastises Mr. Moffat with a whip judiciously selected; George Vavasour in *CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?* attacks John Grey; the rascally husband in *THE PRIME MINISTER* tries to horsewhip the hero; Phineas Finn only averts a quarrel in his lodgings by consenting to fight a duel. In the clerical novels such things cannot occur, but those novels are one and all of them the story of feuds. *THE WARDEN*, Trollope's first successful book, narrates the feud between John Bold and the ecclesiastical authorities of Barchester; and with the induction of Bishop Proudie begins a well-nourished animosity which can only terminate with the death of the belligerents. In that feud the encounters are many and heroic; the two leading champions, Archdeacon Grantley and Mrs. Proudie, draw the whole diocese into the strife. Need we call to mind the first passages at arms between the Archdeacon himself and "that woman at the palace"; the devastating war in which Mr. Slope so nearly conquered and reduced the Archdeacon to believe that even his own sister-in-law was a traitor in the camp; or the more delicate duel in which Mrs. Proudie, worsted but in no way routed, fights Mrs. Grantley in Mrs. Grantley's own drawing-room? Rather, one would pass to the capital and crowning instance in *THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET* where the unfortunate Mr. Crawley, throttled with poverty, overwhelmed with an accusation of theft, doubting of his own sanity and seeing that his very

wife too doubts, is confronted with "the bishop's angel,"—the obsequious divine whom the Bishop, at Mrs. Proudie's behest, has dispatched to inhibit and supersede the accused but uncondemned clergyman. Then indeed Mr. Crawley in the midst of his prostration recovers an erect spirit. Whatever may be right, he knows that the Bishop has put himself in the wrong; he rises in defence of his lawful position, turns the emissary out of doors, summons his daughter back to her *Æschylus*, and, chanting choruses with a fierce glee, girds himself up to the battle. Next day he tramps the fifteen miles into Barchester, fainting in body but sustained through the muddy roads by the anticipation of combat; he encounters the Bishop and the terrible woman, and by the sheer force of his personality crushes the aggressor in a scene which breathes the very spirit of defiance. Then he tramps wearily home again, worn out in body but renewed in mind. He believed himself beaten, ruined, and disgraced through no fault of his own, but at last he had struck his stroke; and he carried back the exhilarating sensation of that affray, as Trollope himself preserved out of the long servitude of his schooldays the memory of the boy who had to be taken home to be cured. No one but a connoisseur in combats would have capped this scene with another, similar yet unlike; the interview between Dr. Tempest and the Bishop in which Mrs. Proudie is finally overthrown. And then, by a very curious and characteristic turn, Trollope's heart goes out to his own creation. There was never exhibited in any book a more detestable character than Mrs. Proudie, a feminine bully, mean, sanctimonious, cruel, and miserly; and no one was more prone to detest her than Trollope himself. Yet in the day of her defeat, when she knew herself openly disgraced, when even her

servile bishop turned upon her and accused her, and would not be reconciled, Trollope has compassion upon the woman and cannot but sympathise with such a strenuous fighter, who when she can fight no longer dies of the pang. "The King has killed his heart:" in something of the same spirit as Shakespeare's when he parts from Falstaff, Trollope says farewell to Mrs. Proudie; and it is really by a fine exercise of art that he contrives to enlist some of our sympathy for the tragedy of her unregretted end.

I do not think that he has anywhere done anything so good as the best parts of this book; and Archdeacon Grantley and Mrs. Proudie seem to me his finest achievements. Trollope himself claimed to be judged by the series of political novels in whose action Plantagenet Palliser appears,—*CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?*, *PHINEAS FINN*, *PHINEAS REDUX*, and *THE PRIME MINISTER*. He prided himself especially upon the character of Mr. Palliser, in whom he considered himself to have represented one who might stand for the type of an English gentleman. At least this may be conceded, that anyone who studies this character will be in a position to understand precisely those qualities which have made parliamentary government so conspicuously successful in England as to lead other countries, which do not possess men of the Palliser type, into the fatal error of attempting to copy what is a special development of the English breed. I have no enthusiasm for the type, but I recognise the truth of Trollope's portraiture. The man who is incapable either of feeling passion or of inspiring it, yet capable of an attachment which nothing will shake, is not easily rendered picturesque or striking, and it can hardly be said that Trollope has made him either one or

the other. But he has made it clear that the man of whom he writes is one who will in no circumstances do anything that is not perfectly honourable; a man with few temptations, yet able if need be to sacrifice his dearest hopes; a man of infinite value to his country because he will do, for the sake of doing it, work which can only be done perfectly by a man who does it for no reward; ambitious not of notoriety, but of power to serve by doing things in the way in which it seems to him that they ought to be done; and willing to drudge like a galley-slave for the work's sake. It is greatly to Trollope's credit as an artist that he has deliberately chosen to divest the man of charm, to make him appeal exclusively to respect; wisely too, like an artist, he has given this man a wife who decidedly possesses the charm which her husband lacks, who has in some ways more brains than he, but is scheming, and ambitious not of power for its own sake but for the name of having it. Plantagenet Palliser would work himself to death that he might reform the country's metrical system; his wife would all but kill herself that she might make her husband Chancellor of the Exchequer. The pair between them often pull different ways, but the novelist makes one realise that if the woman gets her way nine times out of ten, the tenth is a matter of principle and upon that the man is absolute. Yet although Mr. Palliser at every turn strikes one as a dry stick, he never strikes one as a prig. It is something to have chosen for your hero a statistician with a conscience and not to have made a prig of him.

Of all the novelists since Fielding not one has been so typically and normally English as Trollope. He is enamoured of the average virtues of

his countrymen, and he sets them down plain to be seen with a hatred of exaggeration that is entirely English too; he is lenient to their vices, but these also are faithfully depicted. And it is just in this quality, in his fidelity to the truth of human nature but more particularly of English nature, that he immeasurably surpasses, in my judgment, the novelists who are in fashion nowadays. Take two or three examples from the books that were talked about last year, take especially those which aim at depicting the manners, customs, and conversation of what they agree in calling smart society: *MAMMON AND CO.*, let us say, *NO. FIVE JOHN STREET*, and *CONCERNING ISABEL CARNABY*. All three writers lay enormous stress on the accidents of life, all three equally fail to display its vital principles. If I want to know what sort of people these are who come to the top in our society,—call them cream, froth, scum, or whatever metaphor happens to suit your moral convictions—neither Mr. Benson, nor Mr. Whiteing, nor Miss Fowler can tell me anything that I could not glean from the appropriate newspapers, from the records of social functions and social scandals. Now with Trollope, it is different. He made no pretence of being in the smart set, of knowing potentates and powers of any sort; but he knew the world, he knew men and women, and he could always infer from his knowledge of it how human nature might be modified by external conditions. Dukes, it appears, have had their day; but in his time dukes were still personages, and he has drawn one whom I can fit easily into the scheme of English society. His Duke of Omnium (not Plantagenet Palliser but his dignified predecessor) is perfectly convincing. He is a portrait not so brilliant and masterly as Thackeray's Lord Steyne but not less

truthful. You can see how he looked to other people, how he looked to himself, how the world looked to him. In short, the Duke is a man; his actions and demeanour are human and intelligible; you are made to feel how his position influences himself and influences those about him with and without their knowledge; but he remains a man, not a peg to hang attributes on. Likewise Lady Glencora is a leader of the smart set in her own day and afterwards a political great lady, but she is something more than that; she is a woman. You have not the details of her dresses, but you know that she was well dressed; you can realise the effect she made when she entered a room far better than if you had a recital of the different shades of orange which made up her costume. You read that she did eccentric, risky, even immoral things, but you can entirely understand why she did them; I cannot say as much for Mr. Benson's Marchioness. Or if you wish for a still more significant comparison, contrast the financier in *MAMMON AND CO.* with Sir Roger Scatcherd in *DR. THORNE*. Mr. Benson will make known to the future historian of manners the fact that towards the end of this cen-

tury the financier permeated society, used society, and was used by it; but the newspapers can tell him that. Ask what manner of man the financier was and Mr. Benson presents you with an arbitrary collection of attributes strung together and called by a name. Now Sir Roger Scatcherd is a man, intelligible to his own age and to all succeeding ages, and if you want to know what the millionaire was when he made his first impact on society you can go to Trollope and he will show you Scatcherd and Miss Dunstable. The other types which have been since evolved have as yet to find a delineator of anything like his competence. If Trollope were alive I have no doubt he would depict them, but he would work as he always worked from the essential to the accidental; and the essential is human nature, the accidents are the tools it works with, the clothes it wears, and the plays it plays. For that reason Trollope can never be wholly out of date. His theme was the average life of English gentlefolk, and for a faithful representation of that life, given with strong partiality for his subject but with no undue heightening of lights and shades, I do not know who can better him.

STEPHEN GWYNN.

THE CAMPAIGN OF DOUAL.

CHAPTER I.

(Introductory.)

THE last year of the nineteenth century had seen a growing spirit of unrest among the nations of the old world. Each one of them, by the mouths of their leaders, spoke loudly of peace, but each one prepared feverishly for war. The burden of these vast armies and enormous fleets, under which all nations groaned alike, had become so crushing that it was almost with a sense of relief, as of the man who half fears but half wishes to know the worst, that men at last recognised in the spring of 1903 that the further maintenance of peace, or rather of the armed truce that the nations had grown accustomed to call peace, could no longer be relied on, and that it was at length only a question of a few days before the great nations of Europe would be locked in a life and death struggle for existence.

With the causes and with the earlier phases of that struggle we are not now concerned; it will be sufficient for our purpose to mention that England and France found themselves arrayed on opposite sides, after nearly a century of friendly intercourse. The war was at first confined to these two Powers, although Russia evinced an intention of interfering by massing troops at strategic points on the Indian frontier, at the same time threatening Germany by concentrating large armies in Poland and Volhynia. Contrary to general expectation the war proved a lingering one. It was

not long before the maritime superiority of Great Britain was decisively manifested. She met indeed with occasional reverses, but her fleets were on the whole entirely successful, and before the war had lasted three months the tricolour had been swept from the seas, the French colonies, crammed with troops in anticipation of this struggle, had been completely isolated from their mother-country, and the great trade of Britain was able to cross the ocean with only slight danger of interruption. But though this danger was slight, it existed. Despite the careful watch kept by British cruisers over the French ports, fast commerce-destroyers now and then slipped out, generally doing an incalculable amount of both moral and material damage before being hunted down and captured by the bloodhounds let slip on their track so soon as their elusion of the blockade had become known. All these destroyers were ultimately accounted for, owing to the impossibility of refilling their bunkers and magazines when fresh supplies were needed. A few of them managed to elude capture and to fulfil their mission for a considerable time, by picking up supplies of fuel from captured merchantmen, or by making a lucky haul in the shape of a steam-collier taking coal to the British fleet; but in the end this lack of coal led to their destruction, though the enormous strides in the science of marine engineering, especially as regarded the construction of boilers, enabled these corsairs to prolong their raids to a much greater extent than had been

thought possible a very few years before the war.

The war in fact, at last, came to such a pass that it appeared impossible to exhaust either of the combatants sufficiently to compel them to sue for peace. France had lost the fleet which she had built up with so many sacrifices; her merchants and manufacturers, the artisans in her towns, and the shopkeepers in her cities of pleasure, alike felt the cruel pressure of the war. But there was food in plenty for the great bulk of the population; grain was poured into her granaries from Russia by routes which no British cruiser could threaten; beef came in from Belgium and from Spain; and, a potent factor against peace, the great French army was swelling with fury and impotent rage, casting about for the means to grapple with the power which had swept the flag of France from the high seas, and which maintained an iron guard over her ports. Thus France, though so far the loser in the contest, was very far from being humiliated thereby, and in fact was in many respects in better case than her enemy, with whom the fortune of battle had hitherto rested.

In Great Britain indeed there was much distress. There was no fear of starvation, the fleet allowing our merchant-ships to bring supplies in ample quantities into our harbours; but prices were high, trade was unsettled and depressed, large numbers of men were out of work, and though the great bulk of the people bore their sufferings with a fierce resignation, and there had as yet been no serious riots, yet it was felt that the war must somehow or other be brought to a close. Not for a moment was there so much as a whisper of any advances towards peace; did any secretly think that even a peace of humiliation would be

better than the burden of this war, a war in which the British had everywhere succeeded, they durst not breathe it. A stern and threatening spirit was abroad. It was recognised that, war having been begun, it must be brought to a successful termination at any cost, and the nation cheerfully backed the Ministry in every step they took to prosecute more vigorously the campaign to which they were committed. The Ministry on their side found themselves in a dilemma. They had been assured by their professional advisers that, so long as Great Britain maintained an undoubted superiority on the sea, she could look forward with equanimity to the result of a contest with any nation in the world. They now found, to their amazement, that, though this naval superiority had been decisively proved at a comparatively early stage in the war, yet that the position of the country was such as to cause the gravest anxiety, and the ultimate issue of the struggle could not be foretold with any certainty. To the army, which had for so long been regarded as a weapon to be used only against savage or half-savage people on the most distant borders of the Empire, men now looked to deal the final blow. At the outbreak of hostilities it had been placed on a war-footing; the reserves had been called out and large purchases of horses and war-material of every kind had been made; the militia also had been embodied, and the volunteers, with the exception of a few corps, the members of which were chiefly artisans required in the manufacture of guns and other implements of war, had also been mobilised. Four complete army-corps had at last been prepared for foreign service, large numbers of good recruits having come forward from the ranks of the unemployed, and money was

poured out like water to give the best equipment and the utmost amount of training possible in the time to the troops thus assembled at various centres. The Indian army also had been very largely reinforced, a complete division having been furnished by the Australian Colonies, in addition to a considerable force sent out from home. To prepare an expeditionary force, even of four army-corps, or about one hundred and sixty thousand men, was comparatively an easy matter, when once the nation had made up their minds to the effort: to convey this great force in safety to the shores of France was also a feasible undertaking; but when the landing had been effected, if it ever were effected, would there be any prospect of such a force making any head against the enormous and highly trained armies which awaited its arrival? This question was anxiously considered by the Government and their military advisers, and pending their decision, all arrangements were completed for the concentration by rail of the troops who would form part of an expeditionary force at Dover, Portsmouth, and Southampton, at which ports also large numbers of hired transports were collected. There were many who advocated an attack on the French Colonies, but it was wisely recognised that such an operation, which would be expensive both in blood and treasure, would have no decisive effect. The ultimate fate of these Colonies, moreover, would depend on the general issue of the war.

Meanwhile the war dragged on. Perhaps for a week there would be nothing to chronicle; then would come news of the capture of two or three liners, news which invariably sent up the prices of all food-stuff at a bound, followed by endless rumours as to further captures, as to the

tracking down of the raider, and as to the schemes on foot in France to apply new inventions for the destruction of the British navy; while all the time sinister reports as to the intentions of Russia were current wherever men held converse together.

At last there came a change. The war, which had for so long been localised, entangled in its toils first Russia, which Power at length openly drew the sword on behalf of France, and finally Germany and Austria, who, doubtless for some material advantage, stepped into the arena as allies of Great Britain. It is at this stage that my story opens. The endeavours of the Russians to paralyse the German mobilisation by flooding her eastern frontier with swarms of cavalry, a plan which had been actively seconded by the French on the western frontier, had failed. The wonderful system, born of the genius of Moltke more than thirty years before, worked as smoothly as ever. Almost before the world knew that Germany was at war she had two armies ready to stride across the frontier of Russia, and to join hands with the troops which Austria was pouring across the Galician border. Two other great German armies were preparing for a campaign in France, an army of the North and an army of the South. The Southern army was to move from Metz on Paris, while the Northern army advanced rapidly across the Belgian frontier (a breach of neutrality in which the Belgians apparently acquiesced), and prepared to strike at the French capital from the north-east. Meanwhile a third army was being rapidly concentrated at Metz to follow up the successes of the Southern army, or to cover its retirement in case of disaster. The French on their part were straining every nerve to drive their ancient foe back across the Rhine. At first

they were at a slight disadvantage, owing to the bulk of their troops having been concentrated in the north and north-west. The collection of transport and troops by the British had not altogether escaped notice, and, on the assumption that an attempt would be made to seize and destroy the naval ports of Brest and Cherbourg, great armies had been brought together for their protection. With the intention also of profiting by any incident which might leave the Channel temporarily unguarded by the British fleet, elaborate preparations had been made for the invasion of England. A great flotilla of small craft had been assembled at Calais and Boulogne to transport the infantry of the invading force, the guns and cavalry being allotted to the limited number of larger vessels which had escaped destruction at the hands of the British. Thus when Germany joined in the fray, the bulk of the French forces were not in the best position for meeting an invasion from the east, though that frontier was guarded by several army-corps spread out along it like beads on a string, from which corps the cavalry were furnished which had made the futile attempt aforesaid to interfere with the German mobilisation. However, as may be imagined, the French lost no time in turning to meet their new foes; all the available troops were hurried to meet the danger threatening from the east, leaving only a force of observation of some two or three corps to watch the coast-line in case of any attempt at invasion from England. But such an attempt was not seriously feared, as it was generally expected that Britain would not attempt to meet the armies of the Republic on land, the sea being the only element on which her power was regarded as at all formidable. It was at this junc-

ture that the British Ministry decided on throwing into France the expeditionary force which had been prepared with so much care, if with so much haste, and the plan of campaign selected was to land somewhere in the neighbourhood of Boulogne, and marching thence on Douai to endeavour to join hands with the German army of the North which was invading France from Belgium.

CHAPTER II.

It would have been impossible to imagine a finer day than that on which the army, destined by Great Britain for the invasion of France, began to disembark. The arrangements, carefully elaborated for weeks beforehand, worked with smoothness: no fogs, storms, or other untoward circumstances, had interfered with the scheme of concentration; and now, at eleven o'clock on the morning of a brilliant day in August, the enormous fleets of transports were closing with the French coast. Two places had been selected for the disembarkation, the idea being to land two army-corps at Etaples, a little town a few miles south of Boulogne, and the two remaining corps at the little town of Berck, a few miles further to the south. The sight, could one have looked down on the great armadas as from a balloon, must have been a very imposing one. Between the shore and the great flotilla of transports, from whose funnels a dark haze of smoke drifted lazily across towards the English coast, steamed slowly some half-dozen men-of-war, ready to turn their guns on any force prepared to interrupt or oppose the landing of the troops. On the seaward side of the transports a powerful squadron of battle-ships floated quietly, prepared against any foe coming from the ocean, though an interruption from

that side was hardly to be anticipated, unless the Russian Baltic fleet should succeed in eluding the vigilance of the British blockading squadron. Further out to sea were numerous cruisers, which, assisted by a crowd of sinister-looking destroyers, acted for the time being as the eyes of the battle-fleet.

Lieutenant Walter Desmond, of the Royal Ulster Fusiliers, which battalion shared with two others temporary quarters on one of the transports, known for the time by the plain title of Number Seventy-Two, thought that he had never seen such an inspiring sight in his life. At one moment he turned his glasses on the low sandy coast-line, to which the transports were now drawing near, and scanned it eagerly for any sign of life; at another he fixed them on the low grey forms of the destroyers, which seemed to move snake-like through the quiet sea, some of them within a couple of miles of Number Seventy-Two; and then he would carefully study the semaphore flickering out mysterious messages from the flag-ship to the men-of-war closer in shore. But the destroyers interested him most. Those low and grim-looking hulls, quietly parting the water with their razor-like bows, looked so small and powerless when compared with the great battle-ships, floating majestically in sombre dignity; yet Desmond knew well that some of them, possibly some of the very craft he was now watching, had barely two short months before found an opportunity, in the turmoil and confusion of a great battle, to strike at the heart of more than one proud man-of-war. Our own ships-of-the-line also had suffered in the earliest days of the war at the hands of the French torpedo-craft, handled with a dash, a skill, and a brilliant courage which had excited the astonishment and

admiration of the British seamen, perhaps too ready as a rule to under-rate the prowess of foreigners on that ocean which they regard as peculiarly their own.

The decks of Number Seventy-Two were crowded with men, all, or nearly all, completely dressed and equipped, though the word had been passed that no one from Seventy-Two would be likely to reach the shore before night. Now that the French coast seemed so close, it was felt that a change of programme had probably been made, and every man there would have felt eternally disgraced if his battalion had been late in landing through his not being ready to take his place in the ranks when required. If the officers chose to take their chances, they could do so, but the men were determined to be ready in time; so, without orders, there they all were, crowding the deck of the ship, every man fully expecting that within an hour more, at the outside, he would be able to stretch his legs on that sandy shore which now looked so inviting and so near. As Walter turned his back to the rail and let his eyes run over the soldiers crowding together in the waist of the ship, he could not help admiring their bronzed faces and easy soldier-like bearing. The one thing that he could not admire was the dress. Gone was the scarlet coat which he and most other people had for so long associated with the name of a British-soldier, gone not to return till the piping days of peace brought it back! It had been displaced throughout the British army by a loose, easy-fitting garment of a dirty drab colour; the blue field-service cap had given place to a soft, wide-brimmed felt hat, bearing in front the device and initials of the regiment in bronze; and on his lower limbs the soldier wore a pair of loose knickerbockers of the same material as the jacket, but of a slightly lighter

shade, with linen putties, or bandages, which again were of a lighter colour than the breeches, bound round the leg from above the calf to the ankle. The pipe-clayed straps, which had been at once the pride and the bane of the soldier, had given place to broad belts of stout webbing of the same dirty drab colour as the rest of his garments, and no man had the least brightness or glitter in any part of his attire. This equipment had only been recently issued to the troops: in fact some of the regiments had only received their fighting-kit a day or two before sailing; and it was generally understood that the new outfit was the result of a series of protracted experiments in the invisibility of certain colours. So far as was known in England, the French soldiers still wore the blue coats and scarlet breeches sanctified by their historical associations, and it was hoped that the sombre garments of the British would stand them in good stead on the day of battle.

Suddenly the attention of all was attracted by the sharp crack of a six-inch gun from the leading cruiser of the shore division, and almost at the same moment Walter saw a blinding flash among the low trees of a plantation which at one point came to within a few hundred yards of the sea. Sand, leaves, and all sorts of rubbish flew into the air, and the young soldier realised that he had seen a shell fired in anger for the first time. The consorts of the cruiser which had first fired now joined in the bombardment, though no one on board Number Seventy-Two could see what they were firing at; and before long the little wood was wrecked out of all resemblance to its original appearance, when our men had first seen it crowning the pale sandhills with the dark shadows of its sun-scorched foliage. Walter now made his way to the

roomy bridge which was crowded with officers, in the hope of picking up some information as to the proceedings on shore. Every one was watching the little wood and the adjoining sandhills through their glasses, and Walter followed their example, but could see nothing of the enemy, the shells from the cruisers bursting in quick succession along the crest of the sandhills and raising such clouds of dust that he found it impossible to make out any thing moving. Suddenly he saw his captain beside him. "Oh, Carstairs," he said, "have you seen what they're firing at? I can't see a blessed thing."

Carstairs closed his glasses, as he answered: "You'll see nothing now. If you'd been up here when the firing began you'd have seen something of them, but they've cleared out. There were only a company or two of infantry, and a few field-guns. I guess the ships knocked the stuffing out of them. I think they've stopped firing now."

"I heard nothing at all from the shore," said Desmond, "and had no notion they were firing at us."

"They opened on us before we fired at all," chimed in another of his brother-officers. "I just happened to notice the flash of the gun in the wood,—not a very bright flash either; I don't suppose I should have spotted it if it hadn't come from the darkness of the wood. Then I saw the splash of the shell just about half way between us and that leading cruiser."

"Well, young gentleman," the Colonel joined the group and looked over his young ones, "so you've seen the first shot of our campaign. We've cleared them out, but I'm afraid our cruisers got it pretty hot for a few minutes. I saw several shells burst on board, and they're not protected like the battle-ships."

"It's a pity that they didn't send the battle-ships inshore, sir."

"They draw too much water, my boy; besides I expect they didn't want to take any chances of torpedos. By Jove, what's on now?"

Up went all the glasses, and it was seen that the cruiser division, which had been going dead slow on a course parallel to the shore and about a mile from it, had suddenly turned their heads seawards, simultaneously increasing their speed. At the same time the mast-head semaphores began to spell out a message, which, as it was taken in by the warships and transports, appeared by the commotion it caused to be of great importance. On Number Seventy-Two the tinkling of the engine-room bells and the sudden clouds of smoke from the funnel, coupled with the renewed motion and the altered course, the vessel's stern instead of her bow being now turned to the shore, gave indication that the master had been informed of the meaning of the signal, all the transports being provided with trained naval signalmen, and the majority with naval transport-officers as well. The Colonel was greatly excited. "What is it, Skipper?" he shouted to the fore-bridge.

"Blooming submarines!" bellowed back the hoarse voice of the skipper.

"Submarines!" echoed the group of officers, and once more was the surface of the water astern of the cruisers searched with glasses for some sign of that dreaded enemy. Every now and then all the quick-firing guns of the cruisers, which could be brought to bear astern, were discharged almost simultaneously as one or other of the submarine monsters, for there were two of them, came to the surface to correct their bearing on their target. The calm sea was against them. "There's one!" would come in an excited yell

from fifty throats, as the sun sparkled for a moment on the low dome from which the evil little craft was conned. The next instant the dome would pitch easily forward and disappear from sight, and the next the whole surface of the sea in the neighbourhood of where it was last seen would be torn and lashed into spouts and jets of foam by the shells of the cruisers.

"They'll never hit 'em that way," said the Colonel in disgust; "and we ought to have at least a thousand men ashore by now."

The skipper leaned aft from the bridge and signed to attract the Colonel's attention. "Just watch a moment, Colonel. You'll see some fun now, sir," and he pointed a fat forefinger towards the battle-fleet. The transports had now parted into two columns, one column going towards the English shore, the other in a more southerly direction, while the men-of-war had opened out so as to move on the outskirts of the mass of transports like dogs herding a flock of sheep. One, however, had clearly a different mission. As the transports parted to right and left, a wide lane of water was left between them, and down this lane came majestically a huge battle-ship.

The cruisers, which had all this time been firing uselessly at the two submarines, now parted right and left in the same manner as the transports, and were thus compelled to cease firing from the fear of hitting each other. The great battle-ship slackened speed for a moment, then put her helm hard over and turned her stern towards the spot where the submarine boats had last been seen. As she turned, however, it was seen that she had left four electric launches floating on the water. These launches had no occupants; they were steered and managed entirely from the battle-

ship from which they had been dropped, and yet, thanks to a recent invention, were able to move without being in any way connected by wires with the parent ship. All now watched with breathless interest the movements of these mysterious craft, which were left an ever-widening area for their evolutions by the separating fleets. Meanwhile several destroyers had come in between the spot where the submarines had last been seen and the French shore, so that these latter were now encircled by enemies. A few minutes of manoeuvring, watched with breathless interest, passed.

"I wonder why the French don't come after some of the transports," said Walter.

"For the very good reason that they can't catch them," retorted his Colonel. "Those submarines can only go about seven or eight knots at the best when under water. We are all safe enough; but now that they've been seen they must be accounted for. Otherwise, when we go back and anchor, we might get blown up one at a time as we're disembarking. Besides, all France knows we're here now, and if we don't get ashore soon, it's my belief we won't get ashore at all."

Suddenly one of the submarine boats ventured to the surface again to take stock of the situation. It was only a momentary glimpse that she afforded her enemies, but it was enough. Within half a minute the water in the neighbourhood of where she had been seen was rent violently in every direction by the explosion of the powerful torpedoes fired from the destroyers and from the electric launches. The shot which had torn the surface of the sea had proved harmless to the craft below it; but the torpedoes had been more effectual. Scarcely had the water thrown up by

the ast explosion subsided when a long greenish hull was seen to roll over, showing for a moment above the surface of the water; then rearing up one end, with the propellers still revolving, as was plainly shown by the flashing of the sun on their gleaming blades, the ill-fated craft dived headlong to its last resting-place below the waters of the English Channel.

While all eyes were riveted on this sight a great column of water rose up beside one of the destroyers. The consort of the sunken craft had taken what measure of revenge she could. There was not a moment's doubt as to the fate of the destroyer; the lightly-built craft turned over and went to the bottom almost instantaneously, her boilers, as they blew up, sending huge jets of water high into the air as she went down. But in striking this blow the other submarine had signed her own death-warrant. Her action had disclosed her approximate position, and again the sea was torn with heavy charges of the most powerful explosives known to science, till, after a brief space, she rose slowly to the surface, a white flag being protruded from a scuttle in the dome as it parted the waves. Two men struggled out on to the platform, but had barely time to throw themselves into the sea ere their dangerous home had, like its predecessor, gone for ever to the bottom. The destroyers, steaming over the spot, quickly picked up the two survivors, and also rescued some of the crew of their sunken partner who had been fortunate enough to escape the fate of their ship.

"By Jove!" said Walter, "how do they get fellows to man those submarine boats?"

"Yes," said one of his brother-officers, "I must say I should prefer to die in the light of day myself."

"Well, we've wasted half an hour over that job," said the Colonel.

CHAPTER III.

DOUBTLESS Colonel Daunt was right, and a half-hour, which could very ill be spared, had been wasted in endeavouring to dispose of the dangerous submarine boats of the French; but Walter could not regard it in that light. He could not help thinking of the struggle he had just witnessed: of the electric launches and destroyers wheeling round the doomed French boat like gulls round a piece of offal; of the sea rent and torn by the hideous forces which science has placed at the disposal of man; of the sickening heave with which the first submarine, like a wounded monster, had plunged for the last time into the depths; of the horrifying catastrophe to the destroyer, appalling in its completeness and suddenness. These horrid sights, which seemed so much a matter of course to his older comrades, had a most disquieting effect on his nerves. Like every other Englishman he had, since the commencement of the war, read with avidity all the accounts of the fighting which had taken place between the contending Powers, and had exulted with the rest of his kind when he read of British successes, of French fleets dispersed and destroyed, of successful torpedo-attacks, or of the annihilation of other submarine boats. But now that he had seen war face to face for himself, though what he had seen could only be regarded as the pettiest of skirmishes, he could not repress a shudder as its realities began to dawn upon him, and the loud rejoicings of his brother-officers at the destruction of the gallant Frenchmen jarred upon his spirit. However, he soon realised that thoughts like these must be banished

from his mind, if he wished to keep his nerve for the ordeal which was doubtless before them all, so he resumed his old place on the poop and once more concentrated his attention on the changing scene before him.

Looking far away to the south-west, Walter was able to catch occasional glimpses, through the masts of the ships moving in his vicinity, of the proceedings of the right wing of the British flotilla, which had evidently commenced the landing of that portion of the expedition. The transports opposite Berck had closed in as near as was safe to the sandy beach, and the sea between the ships and the shore was darkened with swarms of boats, which had evidently met so far with no serious opposition. Preparations for the landing of the force to which he belonged were also in progress. The cruisers had already resumed their position off the shore, in order to cover with their fire the landing of the advanced parties, while steam-cutters and electric launches, evidently intended for countermining purposes, were already standing in towards the entrance of the little river which led to the port of Etaples. A string of large boats crowded with men was being towed slowly by a panting picket-boat to the shore opposite the wood from which the first shots of the campaign had been fired; and, as Walter watched them, the leading boat took the ground and its occupants, springing into the sea, rapidly spread into a long skirmish-line which went wavering up the sandhills and disappeared into what was left of the wood. In like manner boat after boat discharged its men, each boat-load, in a similar loose formation, disappearing in succession over the crest of the sandhills. A series of muffled explosions now told him that the counter-mining launches were busy at work, and the silvery

columns of spray cast up by them could be seen every instant over the low headland behind which the roofs of the houses which formed the town of Etaples lay shimmering under the August sun. As the launches cleared the way the steam-cutters followed slowly, sounding for the channel and dropping buoys here and there to guide the transports, all those which usually marked the passage having naturally been removed by the French. Of further opposition to the landing there was no sign.

As Walter was watching these preparations with the greatest interest he was disturbed by the approach of the adjutant of his regiment, a brother-subaltern, who touched him lightly upon the shoulder and told him that he was wanted by the Colonel in the saloon, as the orders for their disembarkation were to be read out to the officers. Walter ran off at once and entering the saloon found his commanding officer seated at the long table intently studying a map which was spread out before him. In a few minutes the saloon was crowded with officers; the adjutant took up his station behind the Colonel's chair, and rapidly running his eye over the assembled officers reported that all were present. The Colonel raised his head from his map. "Look at your maps, gentlemen," he said. There was a great rustling of paper as the maps were spread out and unfolded before each officer, or before as many as could get near the table, the men on the outside looking over the shoulders of their comrades. When everyone was ready the Colonel went on.

"You all see Etaples, gentlemen, and the river which comes into the sea opposite to where we are now? Well, I have just received orders that we are to land at four o'clock at the entrance to the river just below the

bridge on the right bank. The general line of advance will be, roughly speaking, parallel to the line of the river, Douai being, according to present arrangements, our objective. The Second Corps will be on the left, therefore naturally the twelfth brigade of the sixth division will be on the extreme left; that to-night will rest on the village of Hubersent, to which we shall march by the left-hand road, that through Lefaux. The outposts for the sixth division will to-night be furnished [here the Colonel took up a printed paper which Walter noticed was headed *Orders for the Second Corps*] by the eleventh brigade, which will detail two battalions for that purpose. The outpost line for the seconds corps will, roughly speaking, run along the line of the river Courre, the left resting on the high ground to the south-west of Longfosse. Is that clear, gentlemen?"

There was a murmur of assent. "It looks to me, Colonel, if I may say so," said the junior major, who had a certain regimental reputation as a scientific soldier, "it looks to me, sir, as if our left was decidedly in the air, a bit exposed, don't you think?"

"Certainly any one would think so," replied the Colonel; "but as a matter of fact I believe the Intelligence have got some very trustworthy information, and that that portion of France is practically clear of troops. In any case there is an independent cavalry force (chiefly yeomanry, I believe,) who are entrusted with that part of our flank. They have to assure our left, or at least to give us timely notice if an attack should threaten from that quarter."

"Well, I'm sure I hope the Intelligence are to be trusted," said the major. "I suppose the yeomanry ought to be good enough for scouting, at any rate."

The Colonel went on. "So much for the general orders. Now, gentle-

men, go to your companies; see that every man is ready for landing, and for yourselves, fasten up your kits, see that they all are clearly labelled, or rather that the labels have not come off, and remember that you will not be able to get anything out of them possibly for a very considerable time. Some sort of a lunch will be served here at three o'clock. The men will have their dinners at the same hour. That will do, gentlemen."

The officers withdrew, and Walter joined his captain in a search through the crowded decks of the ship for the colour-sergeant of their company. On the troop-decks all was confusion. Separate quarters had been allotted to the men of each regiment, but the accommodation was very limited, and the three battalions seemed to have got hopelessly mixed. By dint, however, of a little shouting, Colour-Sergeant Doolan was at last unearthed, and Captain Carstairs found to his great relief that this trusty old soldier had got the men of his company nearly all collected in one place. A couple of lance-corporals were despatched to hunt up the few absentees, and Carstairs and Walter proceeded to minutely inspect the arms and equipment of the men. This task took a considerable time, as it was necessary to ascertain that each man had his ammunition, his emergency ration, his water-proof sheet and blanket neatly rolled on his back, and his large brown canvas haversack properly packed with the articles which he would require. At last everything was found to be in a satisfactory condition, and Walter was given leave by Carstairs to look after his own kit.

As a subaltern he had not succeeded in getting a cabin to himself, or even in getting admission to one

at all. His belongings, consisting of his sword and haversack and a fair-sized bundle rolled up in a brown canvas sheet (marked in large letters *Lieut. Desmond, 1st Batt. Royal Ulster Fusiliers, 12th Brigade, VI. Division*), he found where he had left them, namely, in a corner of what had been the smoking-room for first-class passengers, but which was now crowded with the subalterns of the three battalions on board, all busy with their arrangements for landing. Having examined his bundle to make sure that the fastenings were secure, he picked up his haversack, of brown canvas like those of the men, and proceeded to rapidly overhaul its contents. Handkerchiefs, canvas shoes, knife, fork, and spoon, collapsable drinking-cup, flannel shirt, socks, pipe, and tobacco, spare pistol-ammunition—all was correct, and the haversack was accordingly strapped up and slung over his right shoulder. His field-glasses were already hanging over his left shoulder, and his whistle, watch, and compass were in his breast-pockets, so he proceeded to complete his equipment by picking up his brown leather sword-belt. A sling from the belt passed over each shoulder, so as to support the weight of the sword and new pattern magazine-pistol, which balanced themselves on the left and right hips respectively. Beside the pistol was a pouch in which twenty rounds of ammunition were safely stowed, and to the back of his belt was fastened a neat roll containing a light blanket protected from the weather by a water-proof cloak.

As Walter settled himself into his equipment with much wriggling and shrugging of the shoulders, someone put his head into the cabin and called out: "You'd better look sharp, you fellows, if you want any lunch." At this alarm there was naturally a stampede for the saloon, where a

crowd of officers were already hard at work on a not very attractive meal, consisting of a number of cold joints which had been hacked and cut about in a most unscientific manner, and some chunks of bread, eked out with a few plates of those adamantine biscuits which are never found except on shipboard, and an extremely high-flavoured cheese. Walter felt that he ought to eat, as it was not easy to say when he would have another chance; but excitement had robbed him of his appetite, and after a few hasty mouthfuls of cold beef, he stowed a couple of roughly-made sandwiches in his haversack, and rushed on deck to see how matters had progressed during the two or three hours he had been below.

When he had left the deck, Number Seventy-Two with the other transports had been about two miles off the shore, now Walter found that she had entered the mouth of the river, and was jammed up in a crowd of other troopships in apparently inextricable confusion. Warps had been got out connecting some of the transports to the shore, and as its turn came each was hauled as near the beach as the depth of water would allow. Some of the smaller vessels had gone a little further up the stream, and were now alongside the jetty, busily disembarking their cargo of horses, guns, and waggons. Of the civilian population of the town not a trace was to be seen. The shops and warehouses facing the quay were all shut up, and all the windows looking over the river were closed either by blinds or little green shutters. On the left bank of the river a landing-stage had been extemporised by the aid of lighters, which had been towed across from Dover for that purpose; and some batteries of horse-artillery had already been landed, and were moving off at

a trot along the sandy road leading in a southerly direction past a little village, marked as Trepied on the map. On the right of this road ran the wood which had been shelled by the fleet earlier in the day, and among the trees Walter could see the forms of infantry-men resting in little groups in the grateful shade. That other troops were ahead of the guns was indicated by the clouds of dust enshrouding the head of the column, and more dust rising on the north side of the river showed that troops (probably mounted troops) were being pushed inland as fast as possible. Many of the transports were surrounded by boats, into which stores and gear of every description were being lowered, and the rattle of the chains from the derricks, the sharp orders of officers, the neighing of horses, the blowing-off of steam, and the rumble of guns and waggons being trundled along the jetties, made up a perfect babel of noise.

As Walter stood watching this animated scene he was before long joined by the majority of the officers on board, who, being now ready for landing, were fretting to set foot on shore and loudly complaining that the time fixed for their disembarkation had already passed. Some of the younger men were especially bitter on the subject of staff-mismanagement; knowing little of the enormous difficulties to be solved before a large force with its guns, horses, and stores could be landed, they were only too ready to find fault at the first hitch in the arrangements. "This reminds me of nothing so much as a block in Piccadilly in the height of the season," said one youngster. "Yes," answered another, "without the policeman to regulate the traffic." "There are the policemen," said Walter, pointing to a group of hard-worked staff-officers standing on the quay, their hands full

of papers, busy checking off the ships as they lay jammed in the narrow stream, comparing the numbers painted on the bows of each transport with the returns, and evidently trying to arrange for the landing of the troops and stores in some sort of order. Behind this group a leather-lunged sergeant was standing on the top of a step-ladder, shouting out to the ship-masters the orders given to him by one of the Staff. Close by was a group of mounted officers, in one of whom Walter recognised Sir Charles Browne, the general commanding the Second Corps, his head sunk on his shoulders, his grey eyes watching the scene before him with the most restless interest, the reins lying loosely on his horse's neck and his hands crossed idly on his holsters. An orderly, carrying a large red and white flag on his lance, sat erect on his horse behind the group. All around them roared the tumult of the disembarkation.

Suddenly a shout, "The balloon, the balloon!" from the crowds waiting idly on the decks of the ships, attracted Walter's attention. There, sure enough, was one of the large captive balloons rising slowly above the roofs of the houses. "Nothing like making use of your enemy's country," said some one behind Walter; "that beggar has probably been filled at the town gas-works. We ought soon to know something of what the French are up to now."

"It's about time we did," said Colonel Daunt, who had joined the group on deck; "I can't understand the way we're being allowed to land without a fight for it." "I fancy they must all have gone away to the south to look after the Germans," said some one else. "We'll have a fight for it quite soon enough, I expect." "Yes," replied the Colonel; "but think what a pull we get if we're allowed to land

without interruption. Why quite a small force might have given us no end of bother, and with the railways in their hands they ought to have been able to get a division here by this time at the latest."

"Well, the heliograph is busy from the balloon; it looks as if they could see something."

Walter turned his glasses on the balloon. There were two men in it; one was looking towards the south with a telescope, the other was flashing a message, which some of the officers round him were trying to decipher, with more energy than success.

While this had been going on, Number Seventy-Two had been gradually approaching the shore till at last she found herself laid along side another transport which was fast to the jetty. A young staff-officer came striding across the other ship and, springing lightly on to the rail of Number Seventy-Two, asked if Colonel Daunt was on deck. "Here I am," answered the Colonel, elbowing his way to the front. The young officer saluted: "You will now disembark, Colonel; your adjutant will hand me your states. On landing, your battalion will move clear of the jetty and will halt till your waggons and horses are ready to follow you. The rest of the brigade is landed, and when your battalion is ready the Brigadier will march."

The adjutant, after shouting to the sergeant-major (who was waiting orders in the gangway) to parade the left-markers of companies, handed the returns called for to the staff-officer, and then pushed his way through the crowd to the shore, being soon followed by the sergeant-major and a non-commissioned officer from each company. The Colonel had now taken up a commanding position on the ship's rail, steadying himself by the rigging, and when he saw that

the markers were covered, gave the signal to move to the captain of the company which happened to be nearest to the gangway. This company soon pushed their way to the shore, and formed up on their marker; the others followed and took up their places, the Colonel strode to the head of his battalion, the adjutant reported all present, and the column, put into motion by a couple of crisp commands, swung with a steady stride out of the square facing the jetty into the long street straggling away into the country. A few hundred yards down the street was the Brigadier, with his staff, awaiting their arrival. Beyond him the rest of the brigade were sitting on each side of the road, the centre being left clear for traffic. The Brigadier held up his hand. The battalion stopped, the men in rear crowding on to those in front, and regaining their places with much shuffling of feet which set in motion clouds of white dust. This halt was a grievous disappointment to the rank and file, who appeared to think that, once started, they would be allowed to go on till they met the enemy. However, there was nothing for it but to do as they were told, so, in their turn, they strewed themselves along both sides of the street, in front of the silent, shuttered, and apparently deserted houses.

When the regiment had cleared the roadway, the stream of traffic, which had been momentarily checked by their halt, recommenced to flow, and both men and officers soon found plenty of occupation in watching it. The first to pass were a number of waggons bearing flags showing that they belonged to the eleventh brigade of the sixth division, the heavier waggons pulled by electric motors (one motor pulling half-a-dozen wag-

gons), the lighter carts, such as the small-arm ammunition-carts, being drawn by horses. Following these came several ambulances, also motor-driven, men of the Medical Corps riding on the waggons, and surgeons on horseback walking their horses alongside. These ambulances were empty as yet; Walter caught himself wondering how long they would remain so. Then came a long column of cavalry, hussars, dressed in drab like the infantry but retaining their distinctive busbies, their horses fresh and excited, the men active, bronzed, and eager-eyed, sitting alert in their saddles, looking picturesque and serviceable, though cumbered with carbine-buckets, picketing-gear, nets bulging out with hay, shoe-cases and other *impedimenta*. This incessant stream of horses and vehicles drove the dust in clouds on to the troops lying by the side of the road, till they were all as white and dirty as if they had marched for miles. Add to this that the sun was getting near the horizon, for it was now after half-past six, and that the village, indicated in orders as the place where they were to bivouac for the night, was some three or four miles off, and it was not surprising that the men should begin to grumble and fidget, and wonder if they were ever going to move again. At last, however, their patience was rewarded by the sight of the Brigade Transport-Officer (with whose good-humoured face they were most of them destined to become very familiar) who came cantering up followed at a slower pace by the long tail of waggons bearing the placards, *Baggage, 12th Brigade, VI. Division*. The Brigadier at once signalled to commanding officers to fall their men in, and in a few minutes more the march had commenced.

(To be continued.)